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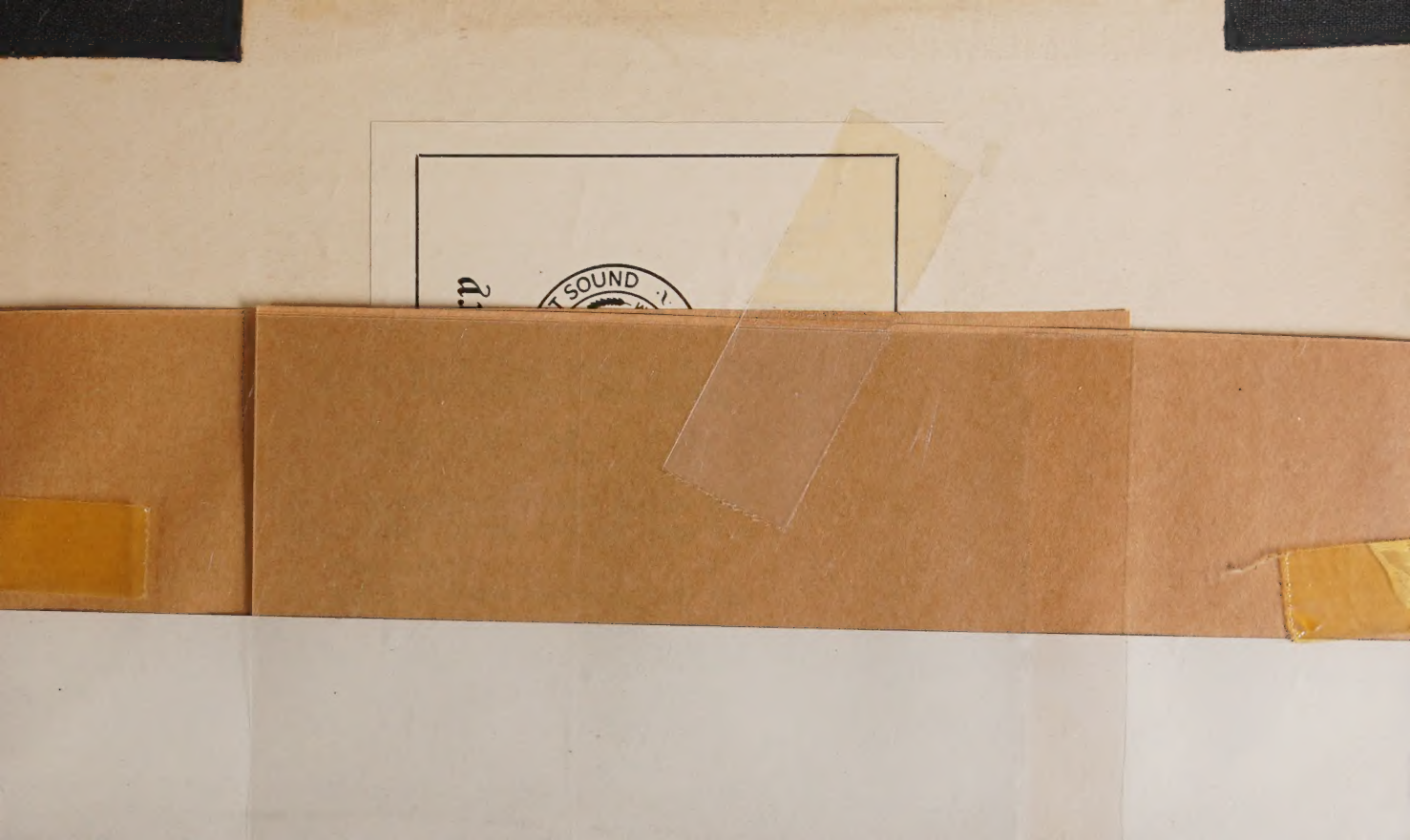

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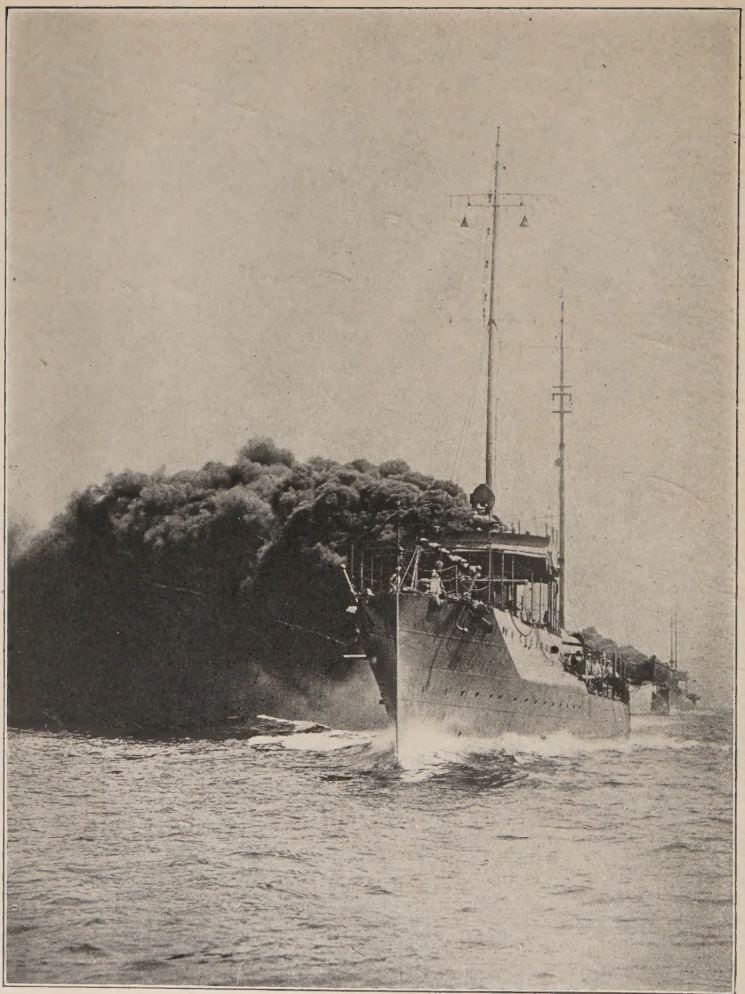

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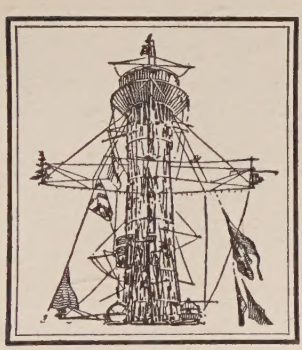
U.S. DESTROYERS CASSIN AND McDOUGAL WORKING UP
A SMOKE SCREEN

THE FIGHTING FLEETS

FIVE MONTHS *of* ACTIVE SERVICE
WITH THE AMERICAN DESTROYERS
AND THEIR ALLIES IN THE
WAR ZONE

BY RALPH D. PAINE

With Illustrations



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PREFACE

THIS book is an attempt to convey certain truthful impressions of the day's work of the Allied Naval Forces in the war-zone. Although the intention is, first of all, to tell what the American ships and sailors are doing, such a record would go very wide of the mark unless it included some account of the heroic toil and achievements of the British Navy as well as the unquenchable courage of the French seaports. For England and America, the first intimate contact of the war was between their navies, antagonists on blue water a little more than a century ago, but now linked together in the finest possible spirit of mutual friendship and respect. Without friction, clear of all jealousies or self-interest, they have strongly helped to banish such clouds of misunderstanding as may, hitherto, have befogged the relations of the two nations. The candid vision of fighting men is usually clearer than that of the politician.

Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly, commander-in-chief of the British Naval Forces on the coasts of Ireland, issued the following order, addressed to the American destroyer fleet, on May 14, 1918: —

On the anniversary of the arrival of the first United States men-of-war at Queenstown, I wish to express

my deep gratitude to the United States officers and ratings for the skill, energy, and unfailing good-nature which they all have consistently shown and which qualities have so materially assisted in the war by enabling ships of the Allied Powers to cross the ocean in comparative freedom.

To command you is an honor, to work with you is a pleasure, to know you is to know the best traits of the Anglo-Saxon race.

Whatever the motives of the United States, — to save democracy, to protect her own future, to smash the hateful ambitions of Germany, — the bold prediction of Vice-Admiral Sims has come true. It was in 1910 that he was stormily criticized in certain quarters at home for declaring at a Guild-hall banquet: "If the time ever comes when the British Empire is seriously menaced by an external enemy, it is my opinion that you may count upon every man, every dollar, and every drop of blood of your kindred across the sea."

But we are fighting, not for England, but against Germany, objects the man in whom the ancient grudge still rankles, while the Sinn Feiner and his friends seek to kindle open hostility on American soil. There is one reply to this, — and Benjamin Franklin said it for us, — that if we do not hang together we are almost certain to hang separately.

At home the American Navy has displayed an extraordinary efficiency of organization which en-

ables it to meet all the emergencies of war; abroad it has been everywhere vigilant and valorous. A tenfold expansion within a year has found it elastic, prepared, with the spirit of team-work highly developed. Without a serious flaw it has been able to keep fifteen hundred ships afloat and handle four hundred thousand men. Its fighting traditions have earned new lustre, and they are reflected in such routine reports as those of the destroyers, the battleships, the armed yachts, the ships of the Coast Guard, and the armed merchant steamers.

A Congressional committee of investigation, which frankly professed to be searching for faults, was able to sum up, among its conclusions: —

All appropriations have been expended or obligated with judgment, caution, and economy, when you consider that haste was necessary to bring results and abnormal conditions obtained in reference to all problems of production or operations.

The Navy, with limited personnel and matériel, was suddenly called to face many difficult and untried problems in sea warfare and has met the situation with rare skill, ingenuity, and dispatch and a high degree of success.

The efficiency of the Navy's pre-war organization, the readiness and fitness of its men and ships for the difficult and arduous task imposed by war were early put to the acid test, and thus far in no way have they been found wanting. And we feel that the past twelve months presents for the Navy a remarkable record of achievement, of steadily increasing power both in personnel and matériel, of rapidly expanding resources,

and of well-matured plans for the future, whether the war be of long or short duration.

Our committee undertook this investigation expecting to find that no matter how well, in the main, the Navy had made its expansion into a war force, we would find some matters subject to adverse criticism. We brought with us the desire to coöperate with the Navy to the one end — success. An examination of the records will show how little occasion we have had to find fault. Some mistakes have, of course, been made, yet the Navy has shown its strength by the manner of their correction.

The Secretary of the Navy has been particular to disclaim personal credit and has loyally given all praise to other officials of the Department, to his admirals, to the civilian advisers of the Naval Consulting Board, and, in his own words, "to the spirit of unwearied diligence and expert efficiency in every bureau and every agency organized under the Navy Department. In this period the Republic has been fortunate in the proven capacity of the naval officers who have filled important stations ashore as well as in the splendid men who have commanded fleets and ships. . . . In the stress of war work it has been a delight to serve one's country in such comradeship as exists in the Navy Department. To this spirit and to the ability of these men who are experts in their profession the chief measure of naval preparedness is due."

To Secretary Daniels it has been a matter for good-humored surprise that he has ceased to be

the target of ridicule and hostile criticism. When recently asked how it felt to be patted on the back instead of dodging brick-bats, hurled from every quarter, he replied: —

"Well, if people should say nice things about me from now until the day of my death, it would n't raise my batting average above .175."

Far less spectacular than the operations of the Navy in the war-zone has been the silent service of the Fleet in home waters, of many of Admiral Mayo's great fighting ships which have been denied the dearest ambition of engaging the enemy. They were kept "out of the game" — officers and men eager to encounter any perils and hardships. They have played a noble part, however, doing their duty as it came to them, always ready for the call, and overworked as the training schools of the war personnel. To toil without hope of glory, to serve for the honor of the flag, — this is the spirit of the Navy.

There are other American ships and bases besides those described in this book, and I wish I might have visited them all. The Azores and the Mediterranean had to be deferred for another pilgrimage. Tireless ships and eager crews patrol those waters, including the fleet of the Coast Guard which is more familiar to those at home as the Revenue Cutter Service. These vessels, which used to put to sea to save imperilled mariners, with no weather so terrifying as to make them hesitate,

are doing their part, in this same spirit, to banish the German submarine from ocean highways.

It would be most ungracious should I fail to express gratitude and thanks for the hospitality so freely granted during my five months on active service with the Allied Naval Forces. To be at sea with the ships and the men, and to enjoy the friendship and confidence of the admirals and other officers ashore was a memorable privilege and a singularly interesting experience. British, French, American, they were men whom one felt proud to know, sailors and gentlemen who had mastered their trade.

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THE FIGHTING FLEETS

THE FIGHTING FLEETS

CHAPTER I

OUR DESTROYERS IN THE WAR-ZONE

MY first glimpse of these splendid destroyers of ours was from the deck of a liner out of an American port, cracking on at nineteen knots through the war-zone, navy gun crews standing watch and watch, smoke-boxes ready to be dropped overside, passengers prudently girdled with life-belts, regarding it as a great adventure to imperil their precious lives in daring the Atlantic voyage. Among them was a senator of the United States and this was his first experience on salt water. To such pilgrims as these the Navy had been remote and unfamiliar, and its achievements of no immediate consequence. And now these insular opinions suffered a sea-change amusing to behold.

Where were those destroyers which the captain of the ship assured them would be sent out to take care of them and chase the submarines away? These importunate pilgrims fidgeted and walked the deck all night, conscious of a new and intense interest in the American Navy.

Morning broke and two or three specks appeared on the rim of a heaving ocean. They grew larger,

swiftly, as they raced out of the eastward to circle the liner and plunge through the breaking seas off her bows. Their men were in dungarees, sweaters, oilskins, strictly minding their own business, with hardly a glance at the liner that steamed so grandly behind them. They were probably cursing it, in fact, because its speed made life miserable for the destroyers which were bucking and pounding and twisting in the rough water.

For the grateful passengers in the big ship it was a dramatic moment. They loved the Navy. It was magnificent. The country had never appreciated its noble bluejackets. The senator laid aside his life-belt, invaded the smoking-room, and swore he would vote for any naval appropriation desired. One of the weather-beaten destroyer commanders was possibly saying to his navigator as the bows buried in a thundering green cataract: —

"Rotten job, these passenger steamers. The people on board think they're important enough to have an escort, but it's the mails, of course. Bully, is n't it, the way these boats of ours stand the gaff. That last time we sighted a submarine we went for her, slam, bang, at thirty knots, or a shade faster than the old tin wagon was supposed to make on her trial run, when she was new. This service will tear them to pieces in time, but more destroyers will be coming over to take their places, so what's the odds? They will have paid for themselves a dozen times over, and all I ask is that my

boat can limp home to a navy yard some day when her job is done, and then let them scrap her if they like."

The United States had been a little while at war when the first division of destroyers filed into a port of the Irish Sea and smartly picked up the mooring-buoys assigned them. The Stars and Stripes whipped from their signal masts and the funnels were white with the salt spray of an Atlantic passage. The senior officer reported to a British vice-admiral who ruled those coasts and waters, a man keenly critical and of an inflexible temper, who was famed in his own service as a master of the destroyer game. Rather expecting delay for rest and repairs, he asked: —

"When will you be ready for service?"

"The ships and the men are fit to sail at once, sir, as soon as we can take fuel aboard," answered the youthful American commander, in his modest way. "And we are tremendously glad to be here."

"Very good. Very good, indeed," said the vice-admiral, and his stern features lighted with a smile of welcome, for he perceived that these were sailors after his own heart.

This was how the two navies which had fought each other a century and more ago joined hands across blue water and became as one against a mutual and detestable foe. The American destroyers were as good as their word. No more than a few hours after this dramatic arrival they slipped sea-

ward to play their part in the hard and hazardous business of hide and seek with the U-boat. Every man aboard felt that he was to be envied and he pitied the poor devils left at home with the Fleet. The risk of being blown up was of no consequence. The great thing was to be in the war!

These lean fighting craft had vanished like shadows from their own home ports and their secret departure was well guarded. When the news was released it sent a thrill to every city, town, and farm, and millions of Americans who had known little and cared less about the Navy talked about it with novel, eager pride. You heard them say, no doubt: —

"See the paper this morning? A bunch of our destroyers has crossed the pond to mix it up with the Germans, and our boys are right on the job."

"Great stuff! I never saw a destroyer in my life, but they certainly sound good to me. We may be slow in raising an army, but you'll have to hand it to the Navy. It was all set and on the mark."

"And this man Sims, — the admiral we sent over to run our end of the show, — they tell me he's a corker. Even the Britishers say so, and they don't waste bouquets."

"Some admiral! Isn't he the wise bird that showed the Navy how to shoot straight?"

"He did all of that. And now they've got it down so fine that they can hit a ship before they even see her."

"Well, I don't like to brag, but it looks to me as if those German submarines were out of luck."

There was eagerness everywhere to learn what the destroyers were doing in the war-zone and the few bits of information that filtered through the navy censorship held a singular fascination. Taking it by and large, the destroyer was a mystery, a name to conjure with, even in time of peace. It seemed to typify, more than anything else, the swift intensity and dashing sacrifice of modern naval warfare in the spirit of Kipling's splendid chant to "The Destroyers": —

> "The stripped hulls, slinking through the gloom,
> At gaze and gone again —
> The Brides of Death that wait the groom —
> The Choosers of the Slain!"

The popular notion of such a war-vessel as this pictured her as fragile, complicated, designed for the reckless attack at top speed, a steel shell perhaps three hundred feet long with only thirty feet of beam, a knife-blade of a ship crammed with machinery to drive her headlong under sixteen thousand horse power. She was supposed to go to sea for short runs in good weather, by way of tuning her up, and then to retire to a navy yard to be petted, overhauled, and tinkered with.

The exacting tests of war demolish many a fallacy and prove that the utterly impossible may be achieved. The incredible becomes a matter of daily routine.

In the most tempestuous waters of this North Atlantic war-zone the destroyer fleet was ordered to cruise the whole year round, to hold the sea in all weathers, to be fit for duty at an hour's notice, to reel off six and seven thousand miles a month per ship, or twice around the watery globe in a year, — and the destroyer fleet went out and did it. Men and ships were racked and weary, but they were always ready to carry on.

Now, the answer is that they were ready before ever the call came to cross the sea and find a haven in a port of the Irish coast. It is amusing, in a way, but not altogether happy, to recall how much idle, ignorant talk one used to hear about the gilded young loafer of a naval officer and the low-browed bluejacket who was unfit for admittance to a restaurant or theatre. And all the while the most intelligent and most highly educated naval personnel in the world was working its very soul out to be prepared, both ships and men, for the emergencies of war.

A destroyer commander, after six months of battering service in the war-zone, confided to me during a brief respite ashore: —

"Hard? Of course this is no soft job, but don't spill any sympathy, if you please. Man, it's easier than it was for months and months before we left home, in some respects. We were on patrol duty in Southern waters long before Uncle Sam butted into the war. And it was drill, you tarriers, drill."

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DECK VIEW OF AN AMERICAN DESTROYER

"You were fairly busy, even before that," I suggested.

"Yes, that's a conservative statement. Admiral Sims is an old destroyer man. He had the flotilla and you might ask him what he did to it."

"Then you felt fairly sure of standing up under this war game."

"Not a bit cocky. Don't think that," was the ingenuous reply. "We knew we had a lot to learn from the British destroyers because they had been up against the real thing for three years. Their officers were too polite to say so, but they had heard a lot about Yankee conceit and know-it-all."

"They found none of it in you destroyer men," I assured him, "and they can't say enough about your fine spirit. There was n't much to teach you, at that. They think you know your job."

"A man who does n't learn something new every day he sails in a destroyer is a bone-head," was the commander's professional verdict.

I remembered a meeting at sea with these same American destroyers a year before the war. It was off the Virginia coast and I was the guest of the skipper of a huge, five-masted schooner bound out of Hampton Roads with five thousand tons of coal for a down-east port. In the twilight, while the vessel moved slowly under full sail, they came foaming in from offshore, one gray destroyer after another, going twenty-five knots with precisely ordered intervals between them, until more than

thirty of these phantom shapes were counted as they fled.

Then they wheeled like hawks and black smoke screens hid them from sight. Later in the night they reappeared and the stately schooner floated in the midst of them, the skipper slightly perturbed as he ambled between the binnacle and the rail and remarked: —

"Not a light showing on a cussed one of 'em! Every destroyer as dark as the inside of a nigger's pocket. If they would kindly give me a little more elbow-room, I'd feel much obliged. It's creepy. Darned if I see how they manage to manœuvre without rammin' hell-bent into one another."

The skipper gazed at the hovering destroyers, so dimly discernible, and resumed, with emphasis: —

"There's mighty few folks that know what the Navy really does with itself. They'll find out some day, when we decide to take a crack at these dirty Germans that murder merchant seamen in open boats."

Vice-Admiral William S. Sims knew what the navy had been doing with itself and the destroyer fleet in particular. He was sent to England soon after the declaration of war to offer the coöperation of the American naval forces and to learn how they could be employed to the best advantage. The Grand Fleet was powerful enough to hold the German fighting ships in check and make safe the surface of the Seven Seas, but the hostile submarine

was busy at its infernal trade of unrestricted warfare against merchant shipping. Aimed against England, it was a weapon which also menaced America's plans to send an army to France.

The war was, first and foremost, a blue-water problem, and the destroyer was the winning card. No other means of offense and defense against the U-boat had been so successful. By bitter experience the British Admiralty had thrashed it out, although there were thousands of trawlers, drifters, yachts, and motor launches engaged in hunting the Hun, besides elaborate systems of mines and nets. Admiral Sims promptly reached the same conclusion and urged Washington to send destroyers at once, as many as possible.

There was an important conference in the office of the Secretary of the Navy. Many sound traditions and doctrines have been upset by this war, one of them that destroyers must be held as units of the Fleet. Secretary Daniels listened to his admirals in council and announced: —

"The fighting zone of our navy is not in home waters. It is off the coasts of England and France. Give Sims what he asks for, and we'll build more destroyers for him, as fast as they can be turned out."

The coöperation between the British and American navies which was begun in this wise should be clearly understood in order to avoid misapprehension which German propaganda is only too eager

to foster. It was out of the question for American ships to be operated from British naval bases under a separate, detached organization of their own. To carry national pride to the extent of trying to "run our own show" would have been futile and foolish in the extreme. There is no red-blooded American more jealous of his country's dignity than Vice-Admiral Sims, and he was quick to comprehend that the one supreme object was to obtain the greatest possible efficiency in active operations against the enemy.

"When our ships are working from your bases," he said to the Admiralty, "they are to be regarded as divisions of the British Navy, operating in concert with your ships and your plans. No other scheme is feasible."

The sailors of the American destroyer flotillas were somewhat puzzled at first to find a British admiral in command of their base and apparently directing their movements. They had crossed the ocean to serve under Sims, "a he-man that had forgotten more than most of the wise guys know about destroyers." In front of Admiralty House and its gardens, on the hillside that overlooked the harbor, the White Ensign flew from its lofty pole, and the trim, immaculate commanders of the American destroyers trudged up the steep street to pay their respects to the austere man in the uniform of the Royal Navy.

"What do you know about this Admiral Sir

Lewis Bayly, K.C.B., C.V.O., and the rest of the alphabet?" a mildly curious bluejacket asked of a shipmate. "On the level, is he the big boss of this little old Yankee outfit?"

"That's the dope, Bill, and I guess it's all right. He and Sims are as sociable as two kittens in a basket. If Sims did n't like it, he'd say so, all right. He would n't hesitate to go to the mat with any old British admiral."

"You have to take off your hat to this Bayly as a number one naval officer, so I hear," observed the first bluejacket. "He's rated a hard man in the service, — he has the Britishers shakin' in their shoes, — but he is surely there with the goods."

"What's his record? Has he handled destroyers?"

"Has he? He commanded the whole British destroyer fleet for a while, hundreds of 'em. And divisions of battleships after that. Just to show the young destroyer officers how to stand the gaff, he did a trick of thirty-six hours straight one time, on the bridge in the dead of winter."

"He'll do, boy. I guess it's safe to let Admiral Sims run things from his London headquarters and keep an eye on the whole show."

"Yes, he has the coast of France and the Mediterranean to keep general track of, and the Admiralty to jolly along, besides various diplomatic stunts to pull off every few minutes. He may as well leave these skittish young destroyers to you and me and Uncle Lewis Bayly."

No disrespect was intended. The familiar manner of address betokened admiration. The American officers and sailors saw their fleet rapidly adjust itself to these novel conditions and were frank to acknowledge that the scheme of operation was singularly successful. There was neither friction nor waste motion, an American chief-of-staff working in complete understanding with the British vice-admiral. It was an unprecedented situation and a most noteworthy episode in the naval histories of the two nations.

The destroyer commanders may have been a little dismayed after their first interview with Admiral Bayly, who never wasted a compliment nor said a word more than he meant and whose reputation was that of a naval autocrat. They were on trial, flung into a game wholly unfamiliar to them, and they had not yet found themselves. They were to be measured up with the standards and traditions of the mightiest navy that ever floated, a British Navy schooled by three years of incessant warfare. It was Bayly who had signalled to an English port the request that a flotilla of his own destroyers be sent to him for some special service. They arrived, but when he ordered them to sea again they delayed because of a furious gale that raged outside. Thereupon Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly sent them home again. The senior officer at the English base courteously signalled; —

"Sorry destroyers were not of much use to you."

Back from Ireland flashed this brief reply: —

"Why say much?"

It was not long before the American destroyer commanders discovered that this caustic vice-admiral was far more of a man than an autocrat. By sheer merit they won his approval, and in his eyes nothing else than merit counted. He made them feel at home in Admiralty House, and when they came ashore there was almost always an invitation for two or three to dine with him. His tennis courts were at their disposal, and when off duty in the afternoon he walked with them in the wonderful old gardens, past the stone signal tower whose flags had flown the Admiralty orders to Nelson when he led his wooden ships in by the headlands and British tars of the old breed had swarmed aloft to furl topsails.

In this first intimate contact between American and British naval forces on active service, there came to be the finest spirit of mutual respect and admiration. The destroyer fleet was zealously loyal to this method of operation and held Admiral Bayly in the highest esteem, while he emphatically declared that no better ships and men were ever assembled under any flag. They learned to know the warm and human side of him, that his austere demeanor was caused by the keenest absorption in the business at hand, that he was reserved and diffident when they had perhaps thought him rude.

Besides the American fleet, there were his own

ships to direct, all the British trawlers, drifters, sloops, yachts, launches, and cruisers which swept for mines and patrolled the waters off the Irish coasts. They helped to guard the merchant traffic and cleared the channels for the destroyers to pass to and fro.

It happened that one of his patrol vessels was torpedoed far from land while protecting a cargo steamer. To the station at Admiralty House came the radio message, "Escort blown up," — nothing more than this. The Admiral ordered two armed steamers to sail at once in search of the survivors while he anxiously awaited tidings far into the night.

No word came back, and he decided to go out himself, in a light cruiser anchored in the harbor. It was a greater risk than a commander-in-chief should undertake, in the opinion of his staff, but those men of his might be adrift and alive and he would try to find them. The position of the lost vessel was uncertain because of cloudy weather and her zigzag courses, but the admiral laid his own dead reckoning and steamed thither at full speed.

The ocean was empty, but a few bits of wreckage floated to indicate the scene of the disaster. The patrol boats considered it hopeless to cruise any farther, but the admiral was not ready to quit. He knew what wind had been blowing and in what direction the sea was running, so he steered his own course and made a guess at the probable drift of the boats or rafts which might have remained afloat.

He hit the mark so shrewdly that, two hours later, the lookouts descried a raft, then another, and finally a third upon which were huddled a score of men, washed by the waves, hungry, chilled to the bone, but paddling with shovels in the general direction of the coast and in excellent spirits. To be rescued by the admiral himself was a compliment which seemed to please them greatly. The incident also appealed to the American sailors, who felt that this British admiral would gladly do the same for them in time of need.

"There never was a finer lot of men afloat than the crews of the trawlers and drifters who sweep the mines out of our way," exclaimed an American officer. "We pass them outside in all weather, calmly risking death and destruction, never knowing when they may bump into a Hun egg that was laid overnight. Here the other day a trawler was unlucky enough to hit one just outside the harbor while she was clearing the entrance for our ships. All hands lost, the trawler blown into kindling, and the rest of the trawlers went about their business as if nothing had happened. The British seamen surely do take hard luck as it comes, —'sorry, but we have to get on with the war, don't you know, and you can't play the game without losses.'"

It was after one of these disasters, which moved him much more deeply than he showed, that Admiral Bayly wrote a letter which he sent to the skippers of his mine-sweeping fleet. It read: —

It is with very great and most sincere regret that I have learned of the loss of H.M. Trawler —— with all hands, blown up by a mine.

During the two and a half years that I have held this command I have never failed to respect and admire the devotion to duty and the seamanlike ability of the trawlers attached to the Coast of Ireland. In spite of tempestuous weather, fogs, mists, etc.; although usually overgunned and outranged by the submarines they have engaged with; with few comforts on board, and the knowledge that they have no water-tight compartments to keep them afloat, yet they are seen day after day to go out to their duties, with the one idea, to destroy their country's enemies who ruthlessly prey on helpless ships, showing neither honour, manliness, nor self-respect in their cruel and brutal attacks.

We have lost some of our brother seamen from the dangers of the sea and some from the violence of the enemy, but the same magnificent spirit continues, and I wish to express to all who serve in the Irish Trawler Force my whole-hearted thanks and pride for what they have done in the past and my faith in their actions in the future.

This was one of the things that the Americans learned and took to heart, that they were working together with men who would do their share, who took no thought for their own lives, and who were noble comrades in the fraternity of the sea. These destroyers of ours also realized, vividly, unforgettably, why the destruction of German submarines was regarded by those engaged in it rather as the extermination of noxious vermin than as warfare.

[FACSIMILE]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S OFFICE,

21st November, 1917.

MORANDUM.

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he future.

It may well be said of our Trawler Skippers what was said of one of the
t seaman in the world's history—

"To tread the paths of death he stood prepared,
And what he greatly thought he nobly dared"

LEWIS BAYLY,
Admiral,
Commander-in-Chief.

e Officers Commanding Armed Trawlers
nd Drifters on the Coast of Ireland Station.

Here in this Irish port were the swelling mounds of green turf and the white crosses beneath which the victims of the Lusitania rested, men, women, and little children by hundreds. And when the destroyers were outward bound or steaming back to port, a towering landfall was the promontory, the Old Head of Kinsale, whose historic name is forever linked with that of the Lusitania and the spot where she went down.

More poignant than this it was to see landed in the port the survivors of the crews of merchant vessels, one melancholy procession after another, who had been taken from open boats, men wounded, frozen, dying, or mad from hunger and thirst, women and children whom the infamous code of the Hun had condemned to sink or swim for it.

The American sailors might see brought in and carried to the hospital on the hillside, for instance, such wretched castaways as the remnants of a boatload of survivors of the English steamer East Wales, bound to the United States in ballast and torpedoed without warning off the Irish coast. This boat had been wantonly shelled after pulling away from the sinking ship. One man was literally blown to pieces, another died of his hurts, and seven were badly wounded. Luckily the boat was not too badly shattered to stay afloat until its bloody cargo of derelicts was picked up and the submarine driven off by a naval vessel.

They were the mixed assortment of the average

merchantman's crew, some Englishmen, a few Americans, a brace of Norwegians, a Spanish fireman. The wounded lay in a row in the hospital ward where the injured had often been so many that there was not enough room for them. Bandaged, suffering, these humble victims of the Hun bore their lot with the patient, uncomplaining fortitude of the seafarer to whom the bitterest vicissitudes are merely in the day's work.

There was no display of hatred. They had been inscrutably chosen as a target for explosive shells and those who should recover their strength would go to sea again and risk the same mischance.

A young Norwegian, twenty years old, would never again stow his dunnage in the dingy fo'castle of a British tramp. A fragment of shell had smashed his foot and the surgeon was compelled to cut it off.

"I vas not much goot any more," he said to me, quite bravely, "so I vill home to my fadder in Norway go bimeby. Dey smashed all but two boats mit da shells before we abandon ship. Nobody on board vas hurted but da steward. A leetle bit of shell bumped his stomach, but he vas not hurted much. I yumped into da skipper's boat and we rowed ahead of da ship, clean away, a hundred yards anyhow. One submarine had ducked under da sea, but the odder one hauled up close alongside and shelled da ship some more. Den, sudden, while we vas pullin' hard as we could, she turned her guns on us fellers.

"It vas bad, I tell you. One American horseman is yust blown to hell, noddings left but his legs. He gets shooted right in two. It vas bad to look at, so we hove his legs over da side. Pretty soon anodder feller is shooted up so much that he dies bimeby. Da bottom boards is full up mit wounded men swashin' in bloody water. Me? I had two goot feet when I signs on dis East Wales ship. Now I got only one. Yaas, I can't understan' why dose Germans shell us poor fellers in da boat. Pretty bad luck, I t'ank."

An Irishman, Frank Donahue, from Philadelphia, was stretched upon another cot, shot clean through the hip and probably crippled for life. Like the Norwegian he uttered no curses, but viewed it as unfair to slay men who had to earn their bread at sea. The wounded shipmates nearest him in the ward were Robert Barclay, a horse-tender from Boston, Jerry Houlihan of the old sod who had shipped in England, and a Spaniard with a swathed head, one of whose eyes had been shot out.

"There could have been no mistake?" I suggested to Donahue. "The submarine was surely trying to get you in the boat?"

"She had to swing her gun around to pot us, sir, for we were nowhere near bein' betwixt her an' the ship," he answered with labored exertion, for he was quite weak. "An' it was only the fear of the patrol boat comin' up in reply to our S.O.S. calls that kept her from sinkin' us an' the mate's

boat besides. They shot straight, the divils. 'T was what had worried us beforehand, this bein' shelled while adrift, sir. A sailorman gets used to bein' torpedoed nowadays. There was men with us that had been blowed up three or four times, in one ship after another, but the boats had been spared. 'T is wicked hard, at that, to be turned adrift in a rough sea an' hundreds of miles from land maybe, to be swamped or to be dyin' for food an' water, without bein' shelled like rats in a trap."

"And did you have any British gunners aboard your ship, Donahue?"

"One gun mounted astern, sir, an' the pair of blue jackets popped away at first, until the two submarines ranged close up. The ship was soon disabled an' the old man could n't turn her, so the gun was no use after that. This dead American mule-whacker, Flinger his name was, had been a good game lad. Sure, he never knew what hit him. Maybe he was luckier, after all, than one or two of us here that cannot be patched up shipshape again.

"They do tell me, sir, that some of these Hun skippers go crazy like after bein' in submarines for a while. The strain an' the work is too much for 'em an' they turn desperate cruel to their own men an' to the ships they sink. 'T was a wicked one that scuppered us, an' his Government will not punish him for it. The Iron Cross for him, most likely. 'T is a large fat score the Kaiser will have to settle with that God of his he is always gassin' about."

NAVAL SIGNAL.

FROM—	TO—	Reported by—
Landsend	All British Men of War.	Passed by—
		Logged by— WK
		System—
		Date— 7/21/17
		Time— 3.07 P.M.

S O S from Motano sighted unknown ship sinking torpadoed Lat 45-45 North Long 15-42 West 15.00

M. 1704/00.
Sta. 6/14.

[4250] 28880/D802 100m pads 10/16ss G & S 109 15b

DISTRESS CALL RECEIVED BY AN AMERICAN DESTROYER

CHAPTER II

FETCHING IN THE CONVOYS

DURING their earlier months in the war-zone, the American destroyers were mostly assigned to patrol service, scouting over designated areas in quest of submarines, escorting ships into port, picking up survivors of torpedoed vessels. They began to comprehend what kind of foe they were helping to suppress and obliterate from blue water.

It was far more difficult for the hunter than could be realized on the American side of the Atlantic. There it was easy to fancy these seas as swarming with periscopes and conning-towers, and Yankee gun crews blazing away at them, whereas the fact was that a destroyer might cruise week after week with never a glimpse of periscope or conning-tower running awash or the tiny outline of a superstructure picked out against the horizon.

The waters to which the destroyers were sent on patrol duty were littered with wreckage, lumber, cotton bales, fragments of deck-houses, life-belts, empty boats strewn where the Hun had been working havoc among the helpless cargo ships. Clinging to his bridge, the destroyer commander read the S.O.S. calls which the messenger brought

him from the radio-room and stuffed them in his pockets, wads of them, frantically sent from every quarter of the horizon, or so it seemed. Roaring through the gray seas, in fog and gales and darkness, the destroyer sped to help where she could, but the tragic signals were too numerous to find response and succor.

England was doing her best to protect the shipping of the world which converged along the crowded routes that led to and from her ports, but her naval forces could not be concentrated on this task alone. Vital and dominant was the duty of keeping a clear pathway to France and distant Canada, of blockading the enemy in the North Sea, of moving fleets of transports through the Mediterranean. There was no craft like a destroyer to frighten the submarine from its cruising-grounds and to escort the merchant fleets, and this was why the United States could have offered no more valuable aid.

Doggedly they stuck to it and slowly the results of their vigilance became apparent. Wreckage was less plentiful, the signals of distress were not so imploringly frequent, and it was not such a common sight to see ships blow up and vanish before their eyes.

The destroyers were gaining the upper hand, not decisively, for there were not enough of them and the prey was too elusive, but the seas were safer where they watched and roved.

FETCHING IN THE CONVOYS

Then they turned to fetching in the convoys of transports and supply-ships, meeting them far offshore no matter how hard it blew, decks swept, almost rolling their funnels under, crews hanging on by the eyelids, and the cheers from a crowded deck of a troop-ship to reward them for the toil and danger of the job.

My first cruise in a destroyer in the war-zone was in one of this hard-driven American fleet. She belonged to a division which was under orders to proceed to a rendezvous several hundred miles from the coast and meet an American transport convoy laden with troops for France.

"Positively the finest game in the world. Nothing like it," had been the envious outburst of a three-striper who was chained to a desk in Washington. "The destroyers bat 'em high, wide, and lively. I'd give my soul to be over there."

A game for youth, resilient, insurgent, craving perilous adventure as the breath of life! It was a slim infant of a boy in his teens who oiled the breech-block of a starboard gun when I climbed aboard the destroyer. To another child of the crew he observed, with a shade of pity: —

"That's Paine, the man that writes stories. He's going along with us this trip. They say he's a pretty good fellow, but don't you think he's a little too old to be bangin' about in a destroyer?"

A hard blow, this, for a person who fancied him-

self as still in his prime and fairly well preserved. It came on the heels of callous, open betting among the officers foregathered in the Yacht Club that seasickness in a dreadful form was certain to be the fate of the middle-aged passenger. One ruddy commander fairly gloated as he declaimed: —

"My God, but you will be sick! I hate to think of it. And we are all as sorry for you as we can be. A destroyer has a lot of extra motions, and every one of 'em has a meaning of its own. Get me? Better chuck it and stay ashore with us, and we'll fill you full of lovely lies, juicy ones."

The horrors of war in a new guise, but these heartless friends could not daunt a man who had been going to sea, off and on, for some thirty years. Presently the destroyers were slipping out of the harbor, one by one, to buck the crested seas. Their departure was quiet, almost commonplace, so smoothly had their crews fitted into the daily routine of war. Barring their fantastic schemes of dazzle paint which lent an effect of Neapolitan ice-cream, they might have been jogging off to a drill-ground near some home port. Most of the sprightly young bluejackets slipped on life-belts, but one could see that it was rather to keep the cold wind out than with any serious thought of being torpedoed by a U-boat.

The gun crews found what shelter they could and the lookouts climbed to the tiny baskets at the mastheads where they crouched behind the canvas

screens to keep an eye lifted for Fritz. When ashore the commander had been the naval officer in the uniform of his rank, spruce, precise to the last button. Now he got into his sheepskin jacket, sea-boots, and knitted helmet, and looked like a buccaneer, forsaking his room below to snatch his sleep on a transom in the chart-room, always in his clothes and within two jumps of the bridge.

His ship had made a name for herself, with one submarine surely to her credit and probably another, and he had a crew of a hundred men who swore by him. His was the temperament of buoyant alertness, of hair-trigger action, which marks your first-class destroyer captain, and although there was never a moment of the voyage without its hazards and anxieties his buoyant good-humor masked the strain he felt.

On a wall of the ward-room was affixed a bronze tablet which had now and then stirred this dashing skipper's sense of humor, particularly when officers of the British Navy had been aboard for lunch or dinner.

They, too, had smiled, without a trace of annoyance or resentment, and one of them had heartily ejaculated, after adjusting a monocle to gaze hard at the tablet: —

"My word, he was a ripping old boy, was n't he! We admire him, I'm sure. If this navy of yours had n't gone teetotally dry, I should propose a toast to his health, by all means."

The inscription in letters of bronze read as follows: —

> Captain Jeremiah O'Brien. Born Kittery, Me., 1744. Died Machias, Me., 1818. Commander of the Sloop Unity. Captured the armed British Cruiser Margaretta, June 12, 1775, in Machias Bay. The first naval victory of the Revolution, called "The Lexington of the Seas." Built and commanded Privateers, taking many prizes. Made prisoner in 1780, Confined in Prison Ship Jersey at New York and sent to Mill Prison, Plymouth, England. Made his escape to France, 1782, and returned to America.

The destroyer set her course and the blinkers winked from ship to ship of the division the orders for the night. One lonely British tramp, riding high, turned coastwise and went her way without an escort, running her chances, trusting to sheer luck and pluck to win her desired haven. She was a grimy ocean drudge, yet with a certain nobility of purpose, kicking along at eight or nine knots, easy mark for a torpedo, dumbly doing her duty as it came to her.

What looked like a trawler in the dusk was rolling idly with engines stopped. She appeared to be waiting for something. There were surmises, bits of a story heard and hushed, — a German submarine discovered on the bottom, — sounds of hammering which came to the surface and were heard by a passing patrol boat, — the submarine disabled by some internal mishap and finding it impossible

to rise, — her crew trapped fathoms deep. The little trawler was waiting, listening. The submarine would never get away from her. The bursting depth-bombs had been dropped and the surface of the sea reeked with floating blobs of oil.

Night closed down and the watch officers took their turns on the destroyer's bridge, clambering down to the small ward-room for a yarn and a smoke before rolling in to sleep with great earnestness. Somewhere out in the murk and drizzle the other destroyers of the division were trying to avoid losing each other, for to be caught straying about when daylight comes makes all hands unhappy.

The skipper dodged in for more coffee and was reminded of the little French boat which had been picked up during a recent cruise, such a tiny peanut of a skiff, not much bigger than a bathtub, adrift a hundred miles from land, doomed to founder when the weather shifted.

Four men and a boy were in it, afloat without food or water, for the kindly Hun had robbed them thoroughly, even to the few francs in their pockets. Theirs had been a fishing sloop of only forty tons, old, almost worthless, like the men aboard her. All the young men of the port had gone to the front and those who were left must sail out to fish or the women would be hungry. The boy was only thirteen, too young to be a soldier of France. The sloop, with her patched, red sails and these wizened patriarchs of a crew, seemed scarcely worth the venge-

ance of Imperial Germany, but it was a bit of "frightfulness" and therefore calculated to keep other poor French fishermen ashore.

Huddled in their cockleshell of a skiff, these forlorn sea-waifs saw the destroyer bear down on them and were in terror lest it might be another visitation of the enemy. They trembled in their wooden shoes, muttering prayers, clasping their hands, their seamed, brown visages wistfully agitated. Even when taken aboard the destroyer they were perturbed until the word "Americans" was repeated to them over and over again, and they had looked about the deck and were convinced. Then the boy exploded in as joyous an "*Oh, là, là, là,*" as was ever heard in France.

The Yankee gunners made a pet of him, dressing him in a bluejacket's uniform and volubly conversing with him, mostly in gestures, while he tried to tell them the story of his village and the fishing boats and the war. The castaways were cared for and safely returned to the harbor which had given them up for lost, and there were many more francs in their pockets than the Huns had robbed them of.

The destroyer cavorted, stood on her head in one of those extra motions and went smashing into a comber that made the men of the watch cling to the life-lines as they clawed their way along the narrow deck. To be washed overboard, even in weather no heavier than this, was the easiest trick in the world. The ward-room mess boys knew there would be no

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AN AMERICAN DESTROYER IN A ROUGH SEA

setting the table for breakfast. It was every man hold his cup or plate in his hand and wedge himself into a corner, with the chairs lashed fast to the table to prevent them from waltzing all over the place.

This was a cheerful room, for all that, and excellent company, borrowing no trouble, letting tomorrow take care of itself, enjoying the fleeting intervals of leisure. The engineer officer had been struggling with balky evaporators and leaky glands down among his sturdy "underground savages" in the humming caverns where the turbines whirled and the blowers sang as they drove the air to the oil-burners. He was one of your conscientious pessimists who really enjoyed having things go a bit wrong if he had the job of mending them.

One boyish ensign confided that destroyer work was too tame for him. He was getting fed up with it. Give him an independent command, one of those hundred-and-ten-foot motor launches on the North Sea patrol where Fritz dashed out for an honest scrap every little while. There was the life!

Another ensign, detailed from the Reserve, slept on a locker and stowed his clothes wherever he could find a nook because there was no stateroom to spare. He was the son of a man of noteworthy wealth and power, and anxious to have his shipmates forget it. They treated him with the absolute democracy of the sea where a man must stand upon his own two feet, and he was doing his level best

to qualify as a watch officer of a destroyer. The other youngsters grinned and thought it an excellent jest when they read in some American newspaper a blatant editorial to the effect that this is a war fostered by capital to serve its own selfish ends, and the poor man must do the fighting.

They yarned of the Chinese sailors who had been saved from an open boat, famished skeletons surviving longer than the white officers merely because they were Chinese. How long they had been adrift they could not make clear, but they were in the last extremity when found. The British mate was still alive, but the boat capsized while the destroyer was endeavoring to get alongside.

"We tossed him a dozen life-belts," explained the navigator, "and his hand lifted above the water to grab for one of them. But his fingers were too limp to lay hold. They just slid across the belt as he sank. It got under your skin to see him, so near to being saved, and down he went."

One of the Chinese could whisper a little pidgin English when they were hauled over the side to collapse on deck. The surgeon fetched whiskey from the medical stores, but these hapless heathen refused to drink a drop of it. A long parley, stubborn shaking of heads and wagging of pigtails, and then it dawned upon their fuddled minds that these saviors were not Germans who were trying to kill them with poisoned whiskey. Jabbering, apologetic, they gulped it down and showed signs of animation.

No true tale of the sea is more amazing than that of the British sailor imprisoned beneath the overturned boat. It made a profound impression on these destroyer officers who were so accustomed to tragic survivals.

"It's straight," said one of them. "The Admiralty accepted it, after formal investigation. This man piled into a boat with a crowd of his shipmates when their steamer was torpedoed, but the sea soon capsized them. All hands were drowned but three who somehow got caught and jammed underneath the boat which floated keel up. I suppose they were held between the thwarts and the bottom boards.

"They were just able to keep their heads clear of the water and breathe. Either they could n't wiggle loose or they were afraid to let go and try to dive and swim clear and so drown outside. There they clung, with no hope of rescue, for no passing vessel would trouble itself to stop and examine a capsized boat. The instinctive hunger for life kept them from letting go and making an end of it.

"At last, two of them did die under the boat and their bodies washed about in this gloomy, confined space where the third and last man still held on and insisted on staying alive. Through two days and nights he managed to survive beneath the boat, and then had strength enough to flounder out from under the gunwale and gain the open sea. There he hauled himself up on the boat and

sprawled across the keel. The weather had turned calm and he was n't washed off. For three days longer he floated before he was sighted and taken off."

At midnight the destroyer was buffeted by a moderate gale. When a merchant ship rolls forty degrees, the skipper has something to talk about ashore. For a destroyer this is an indifferent performance, and the crew takes no notice until she tumbles over fifty or sixty degrees and moving about is like climbing the side of a house which turns topsy-turvy every few seconds.

From behind the weather-screen of the darkened bridge there was nothing to be seen except the phosphorescent flash of the waves as the bow lurched into them. Now and then a porpoise shot straight toward the ship and left a sparkling wake so precisely like that of a torpedo that one unconsciously raised himself upon his toes, took hold of a stanchion, felt cold shivers up and down his spine, and murmured: —

"Good Lord, here it comes. Now for a fine, big bang."

The crews of merchant steamers and transports have opened fire on many a frolicsome porpoise or blackfish and reported torpedoes as missing the mark by the width of an eyelash, and such episodes have been set down in official records as submarine engagements. It is excellent target practice for green gun crews and pleasant excitement for the porpoise. The old hands aboard a destroyer have

learned to know the real thing when they see it, although they confess without shame that during the first few weeks in the war-zone they enthusiastically shot at barrels, spars, fish, empty boats, and what-not, and chased phantoms with prodigious diligence.

Standing there on the wind-swept bridge, with the radio messages uncannily intercepted from other ships hidden somewhere in this invisible area of perilous ocean, the commander told of sinking a submarine, the feat which had won him a recommendation for the Distinguished Service Order. He was zigzagging just ahead of a cargo steamer whose course was similarly erratic, protecting her against such danger as was suddenly encountered. The submarine showed a periscope close at hand, closer than her commander had expected to find himself when he came up. He had chosen his position ahead and a little to one side, the best point of vantage for launching a torpedo at a thousand yards' range.

The zigzag turn of the destroyer upset his reckoning. She was surging so near that he could not attack and his only hope of safety was in quick submersion to a safe depth. As he went down, the destroyer swerved and passed directly over him, handled with instant, certain skill. Officers and men gazed down from deck and bridge and caught glimpses of the shadowy, sinister outline through the green water.

It was the great chance, the hundred to one shot, for which they had been yearning. Fritz was cunning and wary, but he had bungled it this time.

The destroyer was on top of him, ready to loose the weapon he most feared, the depth-bomb set to explode when eighty feet down, and sure destruction to a submarine. It left the destroyer at the touch of a finger and sank within a few yards of the quarry. The explosion shook the destroyer as she sped to go clear of the eruption, and the water leaped into foam. The commander could not wait to search for evidence, for his task was to guard the merchantmen, but other vessels passed over the same spot and for several days the débris from the shattered submarine was floating to mark her grave.

This instance was fairly typical of the remorseless game of hunting the U-boat from the seas. The Hun shows no mercy and therefore he receives none unless he comes to the surface and the crew surrender as prisoners of war. It is not fighting, but stalking an enemy which lies always in ambush, with thousands of square miles as his range. He will not stand up against a destroyer in a duel with gun-fire. Whenever American gunners have an opportunity to shoot, it is seldom they see more than the glint of a periscope or the ripple made by a conning-tower. To be unceasingly vigilant, to harry the submarine into other waters, to drop the depth-bombs whenever the chance is offered, this is the programme of offensive tactics.

The destroyer crew would rather have it as it was in the days of old, a strange sail sighted, the call to general quarters, and a hammer-and-tongs engagement with an enemy willing to give and take punishment. Or give them a fling at a German raider out of Kiel, or a round with a flotilla of hostile destroyers in a North Sea foray. They have no complaints to make, however, and are tremendously proud of their task. It is enough for them to know that the admirals under whose flags they serve, Sims and Bayly, have so often signalled them, "Well done."

The second day of the cruise from the base was still rough and windy, poor weather for submarines to come to the surface. The destroyer division had scattered during the night, but now they reassembled and the radio carried the word along, news from the troop convoy which was twenty-four hours behind its schedule. This meant many more miles to run in search of the great steamers which were steadily ploughing toward the danger-zone. The destroyer skipper displayed no signs of worry, but his manner was not quite so blithe and his eyes were tired. He had never failed to find a convoy, but in his heart was the dread of missing the ships at the rendezvous or losing them during the night.

The merchant mariner sometimes speaks lightly of the navy navigator as loaded with too much theory and not enough horse sense and seamanship, but he must grant the highest praise to the young

men who guide the destroyers along these blind paths under lowering skies where there is often neither sight of sun or star for days, when they must grope for the rendezvous by dint of dead reckoning and the sailor's sixth sense.

They run without lights, every ray carefully screened, through the blackest nights, with other darkened ships blundering all about them, convoys steering for the Irish Sea, for the Channel ports, for the coasts of France, where the danger of collision is more imminent than that of the torpedo by daylight. It is greatly to the credit of the American destroyers that during the first year of service in the war-zone they never failed to find the ships they were sent out to protect and that so few of the fleet were lost or damaged.

This division of keen-scented destroyers showed how true had been their reckoning when at dawn of the third day the ships they sought were discerned as spectral shapes, lofty, majestic, moving in column, and so far preserved from attack. Trained, obedient to the word, the destroyers took their stations ahead and on the flanks, very small and nimble beside their unwieldy charges, swinging against the sky-line or disappearing to the funnels between the lifting seas. The scene suggested so many Holstein cows marching sedately toward the pasture bars while several aggressive terriers frisked at their heels or scampered to and fro.

Presently the decks of the troop-ships were

PRACTICE TORPEDO BEING HOISTED OVER THE SIDE OF A BRITISH SHIP

packed with dense masses of brown, at a distance like blotches of paint smeared fore and aft and along the rails. Binoculars disclosed these masses as composed of men in khaki, every one with a life-belt around him. Thus they stood for hours on end, gazing at the destroyers. If they cheered, the wind blew the sounds away, and the impression was one of intent silence, solemn and very memorable, of crowded ships steadily advancing at seventeen knots toward the stern business of war as waged by a free people on the western shore of the Atlantic who had pledged themselves to make the world safe for democracy, at no matter what cost.

These thousands of American troops had left their home ports in the same silent, undemonstrative fashion, magically vanishing overnight, leaving behind them a myriad anxious conjectures, intimate regrets, sundered ties. It was, no doubt, much like the fabric of a dream to them, to be drawing near the coast of France, with the deadly submarine blockade to run before they should file down the gangways with kits and rifles to swell by so many more the American army of which they were a vanguard of millions more.

There was another night to pass through, the most anxious of the voyage, and another morning to guard against attack, the favorite hour for the Hun to strike when the sun has not yet dispelled the mists and he can sight the tall hull of a ship while his periscope is still invisible. This final night

began most auspiciously. The skipper ventured as far as the ward-room for dinner and observed that this convoy seemed to be fairly sane and well behaved, not apt to be taken with hysterics or to wander all over the shop.

He had been escorting troops for months, beginning with the fleet that brought over Pershing's first divisions, but a man never got quite used to it. A lot of responsibility, said he, when you stopped to think of it. This whole war, as far as America was concerned, figured itself out as a question of ship tonnage and a safe road across the Atlantic. Otherwise there was nothing doing for the Stars and Stripes, no matter how many armies were raised and trained. And it was up to the destroyers to get them into France. Nothing else to it. So without flattering itself, the Navy could claim to be the most important part of the show.

All of which had truth to recommend it, and the skipper might have become more eloquent, but a voice from the bridge roared down the speaking-tube that the convoy had gone crazy and there was the devil to pay generally. This was more or less after the fact, from the destroyer point of view. The senior officer in charge of the transports had decided to execute a zigzag after nightfall. Now the destroyers were boiling along to port and starboard or just ahead, taking chances as it was, snuggling close and trying to perceive the dimly outlined steamers which seemed about to stamp them under.

Suddenly these immense, menacing shapes executed a turn of ninety degrees and charged as though running wild.

The destroyers simply tucked their tails between their legs, laid back their ears, and ran for their lives, anywhere, anyhow, to escape being stepped on and obliterated. They were so painfully disturbed that they hunted some safer part of the ocean and twenty-five knots was none too fast to suit them. The wonder is that they were able to stop and turn about.

Signals flashed from ship to ship and the transports concluded to steam sedately until daylight before resuming fancy evolutions. The destroyers also calmed down and came back, a trifle nervous and easily startled, but again driving ahead in their proper positions. Then the eloquent skipper returned to the ward-room and spoke with feeling, with an earnestness that brought tears to the eyes of strong men and blistered the white enamel paint of the steel walls. It was to be inferred that he disapproved of ninety-degree turns after dark. This was his own personal and private opinion.

The chief yeoman, a sound critic, came in with reports to sign, paused enthralled, and paid his commander a tribute of dumb, respectful admiration. As he passed out on deck, the yeoman bumped into a boatswain's mate who was using language.

"Forget it. You don't sound like anything," was the sagacious advice. "The old man said it for you,

and now I know what it is to listen to an artist, you poor amateur."

And so, next day, the troop-ships came to France in safety, welcomed by patrol boats and torpedo craft that flew the tri-color and bravely signalled, "Follow Me." With them were other ships of the American Navy which paraded in advance. Near the long arm of the break-water which sheltered the port, the transports slackened way to await their turns at disembarking the regiments which had come so far to do their bit for France and Freedom. The destroyers, restless, eager, signalled a "Fare you well" and turned to hasten back to their base to rest a little before going to sea again.

It was a trifling matter, perhaps, but one cannot afford to neglect his own concerns, for which reason I diffidently suggested to the skipper: —

"I was not seasick, you understand, but will those destroyer outlaws take my word for it when I go ashore? They behaved in a brutal manner. They were betting on my misery."

"I have spiked their guns," replied this officer and gentleman. "I have filled in a blank 'Fitness Report,' — strictly according to navy regulations, — which will properly certify your record for the voyage. It should be forwarded for endorsement by the chief-of-staff, but you had better take it along and poke it under the noses of those gloating destroyer captains. They won't have another word to say."

FETCHING IN THE CONVOYS

The first sheet of this valuable document contained the following: —

Regular station or duties.	*At meals.*
Additional duties.	*More meals.*
Any professional or scientific study or pursuit followed.	*Testing Navy tobacco.*
Any special duty or service performed out of regular course.	*Sighting periscopes invisible to officers and crew.*
Proficiency in foreign languages.	*Much inferior to the commander's when convoy suddenly zigzags on dark night.*
Name localities in which duty is desired, in order of preference.	1. *The captain's bunk.* 2. *The ward-room table.* 3. *The bridge.*
Manner of giving commands.	*For food, — excellent.*

It had been a voyage perhaps more uneventful than one fancies such an adventure to be, but this is a surface impression. Submarines were reported as active along the routes traversed, ships were blowing up in these same seas, and the men who commanded the destroyers were well aware of the hazards of their trade. They had done their work, nineteen hundred miles of it, and were quietly thanking God that another tour of duty with the troop-ships had been successfully achieved. They seemed haggard, wearied by the kind of strain which, after a time, begins to tell on the hardiest nerves and makes a man go stale, like a football player trained too fine.

And yet this conclusion seemed all wrong when they came ashore to gather in the evening with their comrades at the club. Trim, taut, immaculate,

gentlemen unafraid, they were very good to look at, these officers of the United States Navy who were playing the finest game in the world and playing it up to the hilt. They crowded about the piano and a British staff captain pounded the keys to the chorus of their own chantey: —

"Talk about your battleships, cruisers, scouts, and all:
Talk about your Fritzers who are aiming for a fall:
Talk about your Coast Guard, it's brave they have to be,
But Admiral Sims' Flotilla is the terror of the sea."

CHAPTER III

THE SUBMARINE THAT SURRENDERED

A PLODDING merchant convoy steamed over a smooth sea, not far from the Irish coast, with a hovering escort of American destroyers. The speed was necessarily that of the slowest ship and it was not easy to herd them in their proper positions. Master mariners of a nervous temper and more horse power in the engine-room were apt to edge away and push ahead of the laggards until a flag-hoist from a destroyer bade them mind their manners and do as they were told. No matter how vigilantly they were held in line and guarded, there was the continual risk of attack.

A slim wand of a periscope broke the surface, like an eye at the end of a tentacle of some lurking and formidable sea monster. It was exposed no more than a few seconds, a furtive glimpse, but the commander of the German submarine had discerned the reflected image of a fine ship, the largest of the flock, which was about to pass within fair torpedo range.

This was the coveted opportunity for which he had been cruising and waiting, lying under the sea during the short daylight hours and awash or emerged at night with the crew greedily gulping the fresh air on deck and ready to scramble down

the hatch at the alarm of the "hooter" horn in the conning-tower.

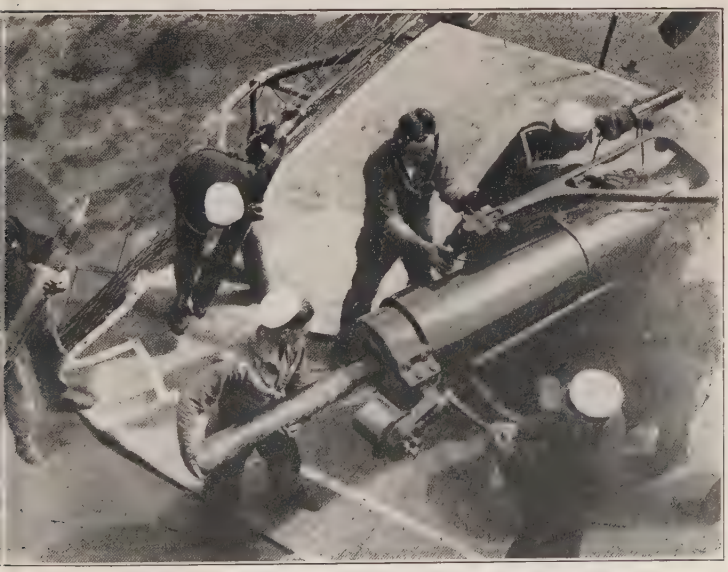
It was the commander's first trip in this U-boat and he had wandered over an empty sea from which all shipping seemed to have vanished. He had blown up one wretched little fishing schooner, but this was like shooting rabbits when one is out for big game, and it was really no better than target practice. What happened to the fishermen was of no consequence. At night he had sighted one or two American destroyers passing like shadows, but their lookouts were unable to descry the gray streak of the submarine's deck as she lay shrouded and invisible.

Now the luck had turned. Here were a dozen steamers in a leisurely convoy outward bound, and favorable weather for bagging at least one of them. A straight run for a torpedo, a frightful explosion, panic in the convoy, and a chance of dashing in and scuppering another one before the *verdammt* destroyers could gather them together again.

Good hunting, splendid, were it not for those swift Yankee destroyers which had a trick of being on the spot when they were least wanted!

The periscope had disclosed one of these hated craft as moving at a distance of no more than four hundred yards, her gaudy camouflage so puzzling that it made her exact course difficult to calculate. The German officer, gazing into the lower end of his periscope tube and deftly turning it, was puzzled

INTERIOR VIEW OF BRIDGE ON AN AMERICAN DESTROYER, SHOWING WINDOWS AND CANVAS COVERING



AMERICAN SAILORS PREPARING TO STRAFE FRITZ

and annoyed. Fixing the destroyer in the field of vision for an instant, he switched the lenses into high power and shouted the order to trim tanks for diving.

It was unwise to linger for more careful observation, with the slender tube above water, because those American gunners were infernally quick at getting on the mark. They had been known to smash the top of a periscope, an inconvenient mishap like blinding a man in one eye. He could see with the other one, true enough, but his morale was apt to be shaken.

The submarine commander therefore decided to dive, instantly, and hope for another squint at the fat merchantman before letting drive a torpedo. Perhaps the periscope had not been sighted from the destroyer's bridge or crow's-nest and it might be feasible to slip in between two of these restless guardians and take position before an alarm was raised.

The periscope which had showed for a moment was no more than two or three inches in diameter, a mere speck against the ruffled, sparkling surface of the sea, but it had been slowly moving at this first appearance, making a very slight wake, two converging streaks like a V, just enough to distinguish it from a floating bit of stick up-ended.

The crew of the nearest destroyer were not asleep, however, and six months of hard schooling at the game had wonderfully trained their perceptions. They had seen other submarines and

dodged torpedoes, but the routine of the average day at sea had been disappointing. It was likely to read like this, in the official report: —

"Sighted smoke and mast of steamer on horizon. Changed course to head for her. Saw splashes which looked like gun-firing. Went ahead full speed. Five minutes later saw flashes from guns and splashes in water around steamer. Went to general quarters and lookout in foretop reported two submarines as visible and firing on steamer. The submarines were invisible from the bridge. Opened fire with bow gun. Fired five shots and both submarines disappeared. Upon approaching steamer, noticed that she was sinking by the head and she went down bow first shortly after. Picked up two boat-loads of survivors, just before which a periscope was seen well astern, heading in the direction of another steamer five miles distant. As soon as survivors were taken aboard, went at full speed to aid of other steamer and escorted her out of the danger-zone."

Such items as these might have been chosen at random from the reports of a score of destroyers and reluctantly the words had been set down, "Submarine disappeared." A day of reckoning had come, however, and this particular destroyer, the Fanning, was about to square her own personal account with the Hun.

Coxswain Loomis, scanning the sea from one side of the bridge, yelled, —

"*Periscope!*"

Almost at the same instant Lieutenant Walter O. Henry, officer of the deck, shouted the warning. Commander Carpenter happened to be below on an errand of duty, but there was no waiting for orders. All hands aboard knew their duty, automatically, on the instant, as the trigger speeds the bullet. A man who requires time to make up his mind had better engage in some more leisurely trade than hunting the Hun with destroyers.

On deck and in the engine-room the gongs rang out the call to general quarters. There was a hasty scamper to stations, but no confusion, and a hundred men were where they belonged in time of action, tense, expectant, on their toes.

The captain had leaped for the ladder that led to the bridge, ascending like a rocket, but meanwhile the youthful executive officer, Lieutenant Fort, reeling off one crisp order after another, had turned the ship on her heel to send her straight at the vanishing periscope. A destroyer is the fastest thing afloat, but her three hundred feet of length cannot be spun about like a launch and she needs a wide arc to sweep within striking distance of her victim. And a submarine with her ballast tanks filled to negative buoyancy can slant downward and flee under water with astonishing agility.

The destroyer made her turn, rushed over the spot where the periscope had been, and dropped a depth-charge on the chance of disturbing Fritz's

peace of mind and deranging his internal economy. Within the cramped space of his control-room, the nerve centre of his complex and delicate craft, the commander of the submarine felt a shock which made the great steel shell lurch and tremble as the blasting concussion drove the weight of water against it like a solid wall.

The effect was not destructive, however, there was no inrush of the sea, and it was perceived by those inside the submarine that she had survived the attack. The experience was not unique. Other submarines had been shaken by depth-bombs and had managed to return to port.

Anxious but unperturbed, the German commander glanced at the quivering needles of his gauge dials and called into the voice-tube which led to the engine compartments. The chief machinist answered that the motors were behaving badly and had been jarred, but the damage was not serious. The commander, blond, robust, stolid, thanked the God of his Kaiser and told his helmsmen to shift the hydroplanes or horizontal rudders to guide the submarine much deeper before another bomb should seek her.

Presently a disquieting report came from the engine-room. Something had now gone quite wrong as a result of the explosion outside and the motors had balked. It was impossible to determine what the injury was. If the boat could find bottom at a safe depth and rest there until night the crew

could investigate, try to make repairs, and perhaps get under way again.

"*Sehr gut*," said the commander, hoping to extricate himself from this perilous plight, and he held her nose at a diving angle in order to descend as deep as he dared. His men were uneasy, muttering to each other, crouching at their stations in the brilliantly lighted cavern, aware that the blond tyrant would shoot them without hesitation to check a panic. These were no volunteers, but men drafted from the German High Sea Fleet to serve in U-boats against their will.

The submarine went down a hundred feet and then another hundred. The officers tried to check and hold her there, and they eyed the depth gauges with a concern which could not be dissembled. The boat refused to obey the rudders. That destroyer's bomb must have played the devil with the hydroplanes as well as the motors. The boat was still coasting toward the bottom, wherever it was, to a depth which would soon begin to squeeze the hull with an irresistible pressure and start the water squirting in through the joints of the plates.

She dropped down to two hundred and fifty feet beneath the surface and the situation was grave. There were signs of leakage. Gone was the hope of a snug refuge on the bottom of the sea. It was better to risk another depth-charge than to be drowned in this miserable fashion. There was only one thing to do, one chance of survival, — to blow

out the ballast tanks and rise to the surface like a gallied whale.

The game was up. The submarine could neither steer nor go ahead. She was a cripple, a derelict. There was no way of escaping the predicament, and ready and eager to pounce on her were the dreaded American destroyers.

It was an extraordinary episode in the long warfare against the German submarine, that one of them was about to surrender at sea with her whole crew alive and the hull structurally intact. Previously, and almost without exception, when a submarine had been bagged it was a matter of destruction, of utter obliteration, with nothing more to mark it than bits of wreckage, spreading smears of oil, maybe mangled bodies, and possibly a prisoner or two. These few survivors had been picked up, as a rule, when the submarine was shattered by shell-fire.

Buoyant as a huge cork, this trapped submarine lifted rapidly toward the surface and the bright daylight. A second destroyer, the Nicholson, had been detached from the convoy to join the search and she had dropped a depth-bomb for luck, but it failed to damage the submarine beyond a further shaking-up. The pair of destroyers had begun to think the Hun had eluded them. They were unaware that he was about to make a spectacle of himself, memorable and amazing, such as the American fleet had been yearning for during its half-year of cruising and scouting in the war-zone.

A red-hot, very earnest reception awaited this unfortunate submarine's upheaval from the depths. The guns of the Fanning and the Nicholson were ready to smash him, pointers and sight-setters anxious to train on him, plug-men and shell-handlers poised like sprinters on the mark. Torpedo crews stood by the tubes on deck, ardently prepared to give Fritz a dose of his own medicine. As for depth-charges, there were more of them to be administered as needed. Previous disappointments had not dulled the enthusiasm of the bluejackets. They were salt-water optimists, confidently expecting to get a U-boat every time they sailed out of port.

Up boiled the submarine and showed a long, wet back, breaking water within easy range of the vengeful destroyers. The German commander gazed sadly through the bull's-eye lenses of his conning-tower and found only one solitary gleam of consolation, that it was better to be captured by the Americans than by those so-brutal *Englanders*. Very few American merchant sailors had been shelled in open boats and their grudge should be less bitter. It was terrible to think of being made prisoner and carried into such a barbarous port as Liverpool whose seamen had sworn to tear limb from limb the first German crew they caught ashore.

This U-boat skipper was given little time, however, to meditate on the difference between *strafing* and being *strafed*.

"Bang," and a shell from the nearest destroyer scattered the water just beyond him.

"Crash," and another kicked up spray a trifle short.

Two sighting shots and the third would certainly find the target and obviate the bother of taking the crew alive. Also, it was easy to perceive that these Yankee bluejackets were armed with rifles, like an old-fashioned boarding party, not to mention sundry machine guns which pointed wickedly to sweep the deck as with a garden hose. Such methods of fighting were as unfeeling as those of the *Englanders*.

It was wholly superfluous for the U-boat commander to pass the word to his men that they had better surrender. They waited not for any such formality, but concluded, unanimously, to do this very thing. There was no desire to be dead heroes. They wished very much to convey their intention to the destroyers before shells, torpedoes, and depth-charges should spoil their amiable programme.

They came swarming out of an open hatch as if violently propelled from below, like so many jacks-in-the-box. Never was a large, populous German submarine emptied so rapidly. And as they madly erupted on deck, every Hun flung his hands above his head with the most passionate sincerity and held them upraised while he bawled: —

"*Kamerad! Kamerad! Kamerad!*"

A gunner's mate on the forward deck of the

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SURRENDER OF A U-BOAT TO THE AMERICAN DESTROYER FANNING

Fanning grinned and exclaimed with pardonable emphasis: —

"*Kamerad*, hell! What kind of a word is that to use in war? Somebody ought to tip these poor boobs off. We are sure-enough enemies."

"They behave as if they expected us to shoot 'em in cold blood," growled another petty officer. "What do they think we are? Germans?"

Crowded along the wave-washed deck of their pirate craft, the Huns were outlined against the sky in these grotesque postures of humble supplication, thirty-odd men who had forfeited all right to be regarded as prisoners of war because the work they did violated every decent instinct of humanity and every hard-won precept of civilization.

This particular group of German criminals may not have slaughtered women and children at sea or blown up helpless merchant seamen in open boats or wantonly drowned them, but they would have done so had the opportunity offered and had their commander so decreed it. Prisoners of war they were, however, to be treated far better than they deserved. The sea had spewed them up alive and it was their good fortune to be rescued.

Resolved that the enemy should not tow his U-boat into port as a prize to gloat over, the German commander hastened to scuttle her and his crew might sink or swim. It was impossible for the destroyers to thwart his intention, for he had re-

mained in the conning-tower while his men fled on deck. The clamor of "*Kamerad*" still rent the air when he stole below, unobserved, and opened the sea-valves which let the water gush in.

This was a sad disappointment to the American bluejackets who were fondly hoping to make it a perfect day. In fact, "Chips" had already begun to break out a five-inch hawser to pass over the stern of the Fanning.

"The swine have sunk her, damn their eyes!" he mourned, in great disgust. "Stow that hawser away, and step lively. We won't need it. And I had bright visions of jerking that sub clear across the pond and moorin' it alongside the Battery. *Oh, boy!*"

The submarine filled and settled beneath its crew before the destroyers could lower away boats. As it foundered, the men were washed from the deck, and two or three were caught under the aerial wire and carried down until they managed to struggle free. Only one man of the lot was missing.

The scene was, in a way, much like that of the tragedy of the British steamer Belgian Prince, torpedoed and sunk, whose crew was transferred to the deck of a German submarine which closed her hatch and ran several miles before submerging and deliberately drowning all but three of the prisoners.

There was a similarity in the aspect of these two scenes, as I say, a submarine dropping from under

a crew massed on deck, and men fighting for life in the sea, but the difference was immensely vital and significant. These German captives experienced a kindlier fate. There was no idea of employing their own infamous doctrines against them, but an instant readiness to save them from drowning and to give them decent care.

The Fanning now swung in closer to rescue the castaways, while the Nicholson, which had stood by in case of need, hastened to rejoin the convoy, having been in at the death.

Thirty-odd German sailors, and very odd they looked, all bobbing about in a tranquil sea, their submarine gone to the bottom, and the whole affair, from start to finish, had lasted less than ten minutes! In the war-zone there seldom occurs what might be called a protracted performance. It is touch and go, hit or miss, and if you miss the other fellow he is very likely to get you.

The happy Fanning steamed slowly among the floundering German sailors while the American bluejackets threw lines for them to grasp. Some were able to cling fast and so were dragged aboard like a large, unpleasant species of fish. Others seemed waterlogged or made nerveless by the shock. To these was tossed the bight of a line which they were able to slip down over their shoulders and be yanked up hand-over-fist. One of them, too feeble to help himself, was about to sink when two of the crew of the Fanning jumped into the sea

and held him afloat. He was very weak, half-drowned, and died soon after rescue.

These two American sailors, Coxswain Conner and Chief Pharmacist's Mate Harwell, who dived after the perishing enemy, could not have told you why they did it. The motive was not love for the Huns of the U-boat fleet. They would have thought it just to set this submarine crew adrift in open boats four hundred miles from land and let them taste the bitterness of it in full measure. Not as Germans, but as men who needed a helping hand in distress, — this was why two enlisted men of the United States Navy went over the side without a moment's hesitation.

The prisoners sat on the deck of the Fanning, chilled through, exhausted, dumbly fearful of their fate, staring at the curious bluejackets who surrounded them and displayed no open hostility. The three German officers were taken under guard to the ward-room, given dry clothing, coffee, cigarettes, and staterooms in which they were unable to communicate with each other.

The submarine commander, a young man of compact, muscular build, his hair close-cropped, was typical of his kind, — bold features which indicated a temper harsh and imperious, the sort of man who would blindly obey the orders of his superiors and, in turn, enforce them absolutely. He was in a sullen humor, absurdly punctilious, his demeanor indicating that he expected to be treated as an

officer and a gentleman, even in the small details of naval etiquette. In this respect the American officers conducted themselves with the most scrupulous courtesy.

The German crew, meanwhile, were given dry clothing and a hearty meal while the destroyer raced over the smooth sea to land this strange cargo at her base port. Reluctantly the bluejackets obeyed the strict routine of duty, keenly on the watch for other submarines. These sometimes roamed in pairs, like rattlesnakes, and the mate of the sunken craft might be in the vicinity.

The bluejackets to be envied were those detailed as sentries. This was a rare entertainment and the prisoners were becoming talkative, a few in broken English, one or two speaking with fluent ease as though they had lived in the United States or had sailed in Atlantic passenger steamers of the German lines. They volunteered more or less information, gossip of no great importance, but intensely interesting to the audience because of the source whence it came.

This was the U-boat's first mishap during the cruise. They had hoped to encounter a merchant convoy sooner instead of wandering in search of single ships. Their commander had a rash desire, also, to put a torpedo into an American destroyer, but this was foolish business, in the opinion of his men.

They hoped to be carried to the United States as

prisoners of war. England would be much more severe with them, so they argued. Several declared an intention of living in America after the war. They wanted no more of Germany. A pity to think, said they, that it was now denied them to spend Christmas at home. This was very sad, indeed. To the American sailors who listened and looked on, Kriss Kringle and the simple joys of a German Christmas seemed, under the circumstances, a trifle incongruous.

The prisoners were delighted to change their clothes, for they were never able to take them off while at sea. Washing with soap was a luxury. Soap was so scarce in Germany that a sailor was given a piece no bigger than your finger as his allowance for a month. The submarine crews received food enough, such as it was, and fared much better than the people ashore, but it was incredible to find such abundance of everything on board a ship of the American Navy. In Germany they had forgotten what white bread tasted like.

A boatswain's mate of the Fanning surveyed a group of the prisoners who were rounded up near the engine-room hatch and remarked, without heat: —

"Those murderers ought to be strung up by the thumbs, take it from me, but I suppose they had to do what this bum Kaiser told 'em. That's no excuse, and yet it makes a little difference. Are they shedding any tears because that dear old sub-

GERMAN PRISONERS CAPTURED BY THE FANNING

marine fell from under 'em? Nary a tear. This is the luckiest thing that has happened to those guys since they left Heligoland, or wherever it was."

"They don't look the part, at that," replied a sentry. "I have seen worse-looking mugs, including yours, Shorty. The orders are to treat them firmly, but without undue severity. But I surely do wish one of them would make a break and give me a lawful excuse to knock his block off. Lovin' your enemies never did make a hit with me."

Bareheaded, some without shoes, their faces pallid from the strain and confinement of duty in a submarine, the prisoners conveyed an impression singularly forlorn. They became silent and fearful when the destroyer reached her port and found a mooring buoy. The news already sent by radio now ran from ship to ship and was cheered aboard other destroyers which rode near by or nestled side by side in sociable groups. Lucky Fanning! Not all luck, though, and there was generous congratulation throughout the fleet.

At once the prisoners were transferred to a larger American ship where they could be strictly isolated, one from another, in order that no false statements should be concocted. They went in boats, heavily guarded, and so passed beyond the ken of the destroyer which had been so brilliantly rewarded for her months of toil and daring on the high seas. The German officers were low-spirited, as though disgrace awaited them at home as punishment for

their surrender. Ever mindful of their rank and dignity, they clicked their heels together and bowed in farewell to the American officers as they went over the side.

The Germans were shifted again next day, this time to a British naval vessel for a voyage to England and a prison camp. They had lost the fear of death at the hands of the Americans, but now the forebodings became acute. Several of them asked, in a hopeless, resigned manner, when they were to be shot. They were unable to realize that their own brand of Hate was made in Germany and nowhere else. The captain of the British ship was a kindly, courteous man, but if he acknowledged the salutes of the German officers when they climbed his gangway, I failed to notice it. He had an intimate acquaintance with the methods of submarine warfare as waged by the Hun. Ten thousand British merchant seamen, sailing in their lawful trade, had been slain by a Germany which posed as a champion of the "freedom of the seas."

Now, this British naval craft was small and the captain was strictly enjoined to separate these thirty-odd prisoners during the voyage. A difficult problem, which he solved by marking off squares on the decks with a piece of chalk and placing a prisoner in each square with a sentry over him.

When this worthy captain of the Royal Navy returned to his base, I asked him if the prisoners had given him any trouble.

"Oh, none whatever. How could they? The blighters were tucked away all tidy in their chalked compartments."

"It was a rough night, rather cold," I suggested, "and some of them were shy of overcoats and blankets."

"So they were," said this amiable man. "Oh, I did my best for them. When they complained of the weather, I told them to wrap the chalk-lines around themselves."

Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly paid the Fanning the honor of going aboard to commend the officers and crew. The American chief-of-staff also visited the destroyer and made a neat little speech, the men clustered in front of him with the guns and torpedo-tubes for a background. He read the telegrams received from the Navy Department and one from Vice-Admiral William S. Sims, commanding the American Naval Forces in European waters. There were nods and grins when this message ended with the crisp exhortation, "*Go out and do it again.*" It sounded like Sims, the old destroyer man.

CHAPTER IV

THE HAZARDS OF THE GAME

THE American destroyer fleet in the war-zone was lucky enough to cruise seven months without losing a ship by mine or torpedo, but the price of warfare was only deferred. It had to be paid sooner or later. The first bitter taste of disaster came with the destruction of the Jacob Jones and the death of two officers and sixty-four fine young seamen, snuffed out with no chance to fight back, drowned or torn to bits by an enemy whom neither skill nor vigilance could thwart.

An Englishwoman living in the port, who had endured many sorrows of this kind, and to whom there was nothing novel in tragedies of blue water, wrote in the course of a letter to a friend: —

"To-day we are very sad over the Jacob Jones, but the war takes its toll of us all. And each time it hits us we must face it and show we are not afraid. It is better to die and win than to live and lose."

It was brave consolation to know that the men of the lost destroyer had died and won, true to the traditions of a navy which has many times stood the test of adverse fortune. They had rescued from sinking ships more survivors than any other vessel of their fleet, including three hundred of the crew of a British auxiliary cruiser, and they had seen

and attacked their share of submarines, but, for the most part, the Jacob Jones had steamed many thousand miles without encountering the enemy. When she failed to return to her haven after a tour of duty with a troop convoy bound to France, it came as a shock, grievous and almost unexpected, for the fleet had come and gone with the regularity of an express-train schedule. The peril was always there, but the edge of anticipation had been dulled. A brace of youngsters on watch might casually observe: —

"Wonder if old Fritz will slip a tin fish into us this trip?"

"I should worry. Too much speed for him. I hope this sea gets easier so I can pound out a good night's sleep. We have n't been blown up yet, have we?"

"Knock on wood, you gink."

"Sure I will. This is the life, if you don't weaken."

When the swift crisis came to the Jacob Jones those who survived the explosion did what could be done, methodically, on the instant, without faltering. This is the wonderful thing in the navy spirit and discipline, that it takes the raw boy from the farm or shop or college, your boy or mine, and stamps him with an unflinching manliness which prefers not to live and lose.

There had been no glimpse of a submarine when the watch officers on the bridge saw the torpedo coming at forty knots, breaking the water, diving and leaping out again like a frolicsome porpoise. The ship was swung and speed increased, but she

could not evade the blow which tore her hull like paper and killed most of the men below decks. The destroyer floated eight minutes during which those left alive were trying to clear away the smashed boats, helping the stunned and wounded, or standing by the guns on the chance of a shot at the submarine. Every man for himself was no part of their doctrine. When the steaming wreck plunged under, alone, with no other vessel to lend a hand, some of the crew were swimming, others hanging to rafts or bits of wreckage, or to the one boat which still floated.

The water was very cold, the winter wind soon benumbed them, and several died of exposure. Night was coming on and there was the slenderest hope of rescue, for the radio had been smashed when the ship blew up. It was in such circumstances as these that Lieutenant S. F. Kalk died like a gallant gentleman. His commander reported of him that during the early part of the evening, although already in a weakened condition, he swam from one raft to another in order to equalize the weight on the rafts. The bluejackets who suffered with him paid him the best tribute a man can win, for they agreed that "he was game to the last."

Another instance of this self-sacrifice in extremity was that of Boatswain's Mate Charlesworth who removed some of his own clothing during the night and passed it to comrades who were more thinly clad than himself. They were washing about

on an overloaded raft and realized that their lives depended on keeping warm. Of this the boatswain's mate was well aware, but his was the code of share and share alike.

Commander David Bagley, who had made a brilliant record as skipper of the Jacob Jones, was one of those finally picked up. He strongly resembles his younger brother, Worth Bagley, who was killed on board of the torpedo boat Winslow in the Spanish War, both of them ruddy, intrepid men, light-hearted in danger. It was a coincidence that I should have said good-bye to them before they sailed on their ill-starred voyages, the one at Key West twenty years ago, the other in a port of the Irish Sea where the British ensign flies.

Commander David Bagley had come ashore from his ship for dinner at the Yacht Club. There were other guests and a song had been written for the occasion. It was Bagley who led the chorus in a voice which would have carried the length of a deck in a gale of wind, and the words ran like this, to be recalled when the tidings came of the loss of the Jacob Jones: —

"When Yankee clippers loosened sail
And hove the anchor short,
To catch the booming trade winds
On the road to 'Frisco port,
The chantey-man would swig his grog
And start a lusty song,
With forty sailors joining in
To shove the work along.

"And sweethearts waiting on the pier
Could hear the hoarse refrain
Of 'Fare ye well' and 'Luck to you
Until we come again.'
These bullies put a haunting note
Of sadness in the sound
Of such a salty chorus as
'Hurrah, we're outward bound!'

"And so I chant my own farewell
To Queenstown and the fleet.
Fair winds and pleasant skies be yours!
A health until we meet!
A welcome, kindly warm, I found,
And friends who proved to me
That there is something in the phrase
Of 'Hands across the Sea.'"

Commander David Bagley's report of the destruction of his ship was phrased in the plain, concise language to be expected of such a document. Its value lies not in color or dramatic incident artfully portrayed. The very simplicity is eloquent, however, as a record of the manner in which an average crew of the American Navy conducts itself when death is at hand.

I was in the chart-house [wrote the commander] and heard some one call out, "Torpedo." I jumped at once to the bridge and on the way up saw the torpedo about eight hundred yards from the ship approaching from about one point abaft the starboard beam, heading for a point about amidships and making a straight surface run at very high speed. No periscope was sighted.

When I reached the bridge I found that the officer of the deck had already put the rudder hard left and rung up emergency speed. The ship was swinging as I personally rang up speed again and then turned to watch the torpedo. The executive officer, Lieutenant Norman Scott, left the chart-house just ahead of me and made the same estimate of the speed and direction of the torpedo.

I was convinced that it was impossible to avoid being hit. Lieutenant S. F. Kalk was officer of the deck at the time and I consider that he took correct and especially prompt measures in manœuvring to avoid the torpedo. Lieutenant Kalk was a very able officer, calm and collected in an emergency. He had been attached to the ship for about two months and had shown keen aptitude.

The torpedo broached and jumped clear of the water a short distance from the ship, submerged when fifty or sixty feet away, and struck three feet below the water-line in a fuel-oil tank. The after compartment and engine-room flooded at once, the ship settling aft until the deck was awash, then more gradually. The deck was blown clean up for a space of twenty feet. The depth-charges exploded after the stern sank. Lieutenant J. K. Richards, gunnery officer, rushed aft to try to set the charges on safety, but could get no farther than the after deck-house.

As soon as the torpedo struck I attempted to send S.O.S. message, but the mainmast had carried away and all electric power failed. Every effort was made to get rafts and boats launched, also the round life-belts and splinter mats from the bridge. Seeing the ship settle rapidly I ran along the deck and ordered all hands to jump overboard. At this time most of those not killed by the explosion had got clear of the ship

and were on rafts or wreckage, a few swimming at some distance astern.

As the ship began sinking I jumped overboard. The ship went down by the stern and twisted slowly through nearly 180 degrees as she swung upright, vertically, bow in air. Efforts were made to get all the survivors on rafts and the boats together. All the boats were found to be smashed but one. The motor-sailer went down with the ship.

Fifteen or twenty minutes after the ship sank, the submarine appeared on the surface about two or three miles to the westward of the rafts and gradually approached until within a thousand yards. There it stopped and was seen to pick up one unidentified man from the water. It then submerged.

I was picked up by the motor dory and began to plan to try to reach the nearest land in order to get help for those on the rafts. The next day at one o'clock my boat was sighted by a small patrol vessel and meanwhile the men collected on the rafts had been rescued.

Lieutenant Norman Scott accomplished a great deal toward getting the boats and rafts into the water from the sinking ship, turning off the steam from fireroom, getting life-belts, encouraging and helping the men. Lieutenant Richards was left in charge of all the rafts and did a great deal to put heart into the men. At the risk of almost certain death P. J. Barger, seaman, second class, remained in the motor-sailer and endeavored to clear it for floating from the ship. While he did not succeed, I desire to call attention to his sticking to duty until the very last. He was drawn under the water with the boat, but later came to the surface.

L. J. Kelly, chief electrician, and H. U. Chase, quartermaster, third class, remained on board until

the last, greatly endangering their lives thereby, to cut adrift splinter mats and life-preservers. Kelly's stamina and spirit were very valuable during the motor dory's trip. H. L. Gibson, chief boatswain's mate, and E. Miller, water-tender, were of great assistance to the men on the rafts in advising them and cheering them up under the most adverse conditions.

The Jacob Jones went down as a strong man drops with a bullet in the heart. It was the vital spot, an extraordinary fatality. Hit elsewhere she might have floated and won her way to port. Seemingly so fragile, the destroyers cling to life with amazing tenacity. They somehow struggle through when rammed, torpedoed, blown up by mines, or swept by seas that stamp them under. There was the Cassin, for example, which was neatly potted by a submarine that let go a torpedo at the deadly range of four hundred yards.

The destroyer officers saw it coming, jammed ahead at top speed, and almost went clear, the torpedo striking the stern and blowing it off as a charge of shot sometimes removes the tail feathers of a fast-flying grouse. The ship was shorter by some thirty feet than she had been an instant before. The after bulkhead held and kept the water out. Just forward of it were dozens of sleeping men who awoke without the aid of an alarm-clock and were rudely stood on their heads. Not one of them was seriously hurt.

One shaft remained in place with the propeller

still at the end of it, but the other screw and the rudder had vanished. The submarine popped up from below to watch the infernal Yankee craft go down and was dismayed to find the cripple wildly steaming in circles under one screw, her gun crews on the alert and salvos of four-inch shells ready to greet the Hun, who cursed and dived and sought a safer place.

The only American sailor killed had seen the torpedo coming and ran aft to remove a box of high explosives, hoping to throw it overboard in time. He was blown to bits when the stern of the ship vanished in a tremendous burst of water and débris. This is what the Secretary of the Navy said of him:—

A while ago I was asked to give a name to a new destroyer. I took up first the names of the great admirals, and then the great captains, and all the American heroes of the sea, and all were worthy. And then I thought of Osmond C. Ingram, second-class gunner's mate on the destroyer Cassin. I thought of the night when he was on watch and saw a U-boat's torpedo headed for his ship. He was standing near the place where the high explosives were stored, and the torpedo was headed for that spot. In a flash he was engaged in hurling overboard those deadly explosives which would have destroyed the ship if they remained on board, and he managed to get rid of enough of them to save the lives of all the officers and sailors on board, but he lost his own life. So I named the newest and finest addition to the American navy the Osmond C. Ingram.

The Cassin was towed into port, the ragged remnants neatly amputated, and a new stern built on in dry-dock. She was again a perfectly good destroyer.

During the winter I crossed the English Channel several times in British destroyers, twice to visit the bombed and shattered seaport of Dunkirk. One of these vessels, stanch and powerful, bore the odd name of Zubian and one felt prompted to ask the reason why. The commander cheerfully explained: —

"Oh, we're a sort of freak, quite notorious, do you see, — the very latest thing in war-time thrift. Originally we were two different destroyers of the same class. The Zulu bumped into a mine on the Dover patrol and blew the whole silly bow off herself. The Nubian had a bit of hard luck and sat on a mine in the North Sea. When the smoke cleared, her after end was gone. Both ships were too badly damaged to be patched up on their own. Instead of chucking 'em away, the dock-yard people had a frightfully clever idea. They sawed them both off amidships and hitched the bow of the Nubian to the stern of the Zulu. The operation was successful, as the doctors say, and the navy list had a new destroyer. She was christened the Zubian, — half Zulu, half Nubian, do you see, — a blend of African races that worked out very well, indeed."

The high-tensile steel of the quivering, vibrant

fabric of a destroyer will withstand shocks that, by all physical laws, ought to buckle and break her. What of the men that handle them and the strain on nerves and endurance? The American destroyer officer, temperamentally more high-strung and intense than his British ally, probably feels the wear and tear sooner. He is whetted to a finer edge because the war is still new to him, while the Royal Navy has lived almost four years of it, so long that war seems like the normal routine of life and it is extremely difficult to imagine or recall anything else.

A young man's game! This is the fundamental axiom hammered out by the hard experience of the destroyer fleets of both navies. Homeward bound across the Atlantic, I was shipmate with the commander of an American destroyer who had been on active service in the war-zone. He was a man of stalwart physique, broad-shouldered and deep-chested, his face burned red by wind and sun. His aspect conveyed an impression of stolid composure and you would have said that he was in the prime of health and vigor. It was obvious, however, that he was considerably older in years than the average officer of his rank in the destroyer service.

He was, in fact, not much past forty-five, but confessed that he was not young enough to stand the destroyer pace. He had made a fine record for himself and his ship through more than a half-year of it, but his nerves had cracked. The other com-

LIFE LINE ALONG THE DECK OF A BRITISH DESTROYER IN READINESS FOR ROUGH WEATHER

OFFICERS IN THE WARD-ROOM OF A BRITISH DESTROYER AT SEA
Showing ropes for use in rough weather

manders had the advantage of him because they were Annapolis men, with more rapid promotion than had befallen him. He had been an enlisted man, commissioned from the ranks after serving for years as a warrant officer. Middle-age, therefore, had overtaken him before he reached his present rank and his great opportunity in a destroyer.

Uncomplaining, quietly heroic, he was so broken and unstrung that he was able to sleep no more than two hours in the twenty-four. All night long he read and smoked, walked the deck, or lay in his bunk, and thought himself lucky when he drowsed off for a little while during the day. It would be a long pull, said he, — this job of mending his nerves, but he planned to live outdoors and hunt and fish and try to forget the war. And he hoped to be fit to go to sea again, but not in a destroyer. Ten years earlier he would have laughed at the notion of cracking under the strain.

In a quiet, matter-of-fact manner he talked of what he had been through and one began to comprehend why the game demanded youth.

"I had no more than my share of the rough side of it," said he, "and I never dreamed of having to quit until — well, I could n't sleep and I worried too much. Then they ordered me home. What happened, besides scrapping with submarines?

"My ship was cut down in a collision last fall, as you may remember. There was nothing very unusual in being bumped into, for we learn to

expect little things like that. Running without lights, fog, thick weather, nervous merchant skippers, — the wonder is that we keep clear as much as we do. This boat of mine was almost cut in two. She sank until her deck was awash and there she hung, — almost under, but still floating. There was absolutely no accounting for it. She was doomed and refused to admit it. There was no buoyancy left in her, according to the theories of naval construction, but she stayed with us. It made us love her. Mortally hurt, you understand, but you could n't drown her. I can't explain it. Yes, we got her into port and she came out again, after a few weeks, as good as new.

"There was a fairly busy trip in December. We met a convoy, which was split when near the coast, and I took one ship into an English port. On the way we saw several flares which might have been from a vessel in distress, but I suspected that Fritz was up to his tricks, trying to decoy merchant steamers near enough to slip a 'mouldy' into them. However, we picked up forty-nine survivors from a ship that had been torpedoed four hours earlier and crowded them below. A destroyer is n't built to entertain guests in large numbers. With some of these shipwrecked parties you had to drive the last man in with a mallet.

"The forty-nine survivors were still aboard when it blew a regular gale of wind, a screamer. There was no living in it, so I changed course and

ran for the nearest English port, hoping to find shelter. I fetched the harbor, but there was mighty little comfort. Wind and sea were so heavy that my anchors would n't hold. They would drag until we were in danger of driving ashore, then it was lift them and steam ahead, and do the stunt all over again. The destroyer came up to breathe now and then. Two days later it moderated so we could land the forty-nine castaways, and the pleasure was mutual.

"We went to sea, bound for our own base, but were diverted again. Well offshore we sighted a British destroyer which had been caught out in the big blow. She was swept as bare as your hand, bridge, boats, deck-houses gone, — not a blessed thing sticking above her hull but one lone funnel. We sheered alongside and managed to pass a hawser, — a ticklish job, for the sea was still nasty. The Britishers were all there, barring a deck-watch that had been washed away with the hamper, and they came erupting out of the hatches and seemed pleased to meet us. We towed this sad remnant of a destroyer into the handiest port, and then started off for home again.

"*En route* we met Fritz, and his large, sea-going submarine wasted a torpedo which missed us by fifty feet. We let him have a couple of depth-charges and resumed the voyage. Nothing else happened and we fetched home for a three days' rest and refit for going out to meet another convoy."

One day in November there limped into the Irish harbor where the American destroyers flock a four-thousand-ton cargo steamer that flew the Stars and Stripes. Ragged shell-holes showed in her rusty sides, and her houses were dented and scarred. In a score of places the paint had been chipped by flying fragments. Below decks were wreckage and disorder to tell how the German shells had exploded in engine-room and living-quarters. In fact, the J. L. Luckenbach had been through a lively battle and her crew was immensely proud of it, including the naval gunners of the armed guard who had fought their ship as though she were a cruiser.

The only man on board who seemed unhappy was the merchant skipper. He was an elderly man, bald and gray, who preferred a quieter destiny. Being shot at in a profuse and deadly manner was not at all to his fancy, and he freely affirmed that his berth was open to any bloodthirsty devil of a deep-sea mariner who liked that sort of thing. As for him he proposed to start inland, once he had set foot on his native shore. On his shoulder he would carry an oar and make never a halt until he had progressed so far away from salt water that some lubber would hail him and ask: —

"Say, stranger, what in blazes is that darn thing you're luggin' along with you?"

And here the honest shipmaster would cast anchor and pass his declining years. In the words of the British tar, he was fed up with the war-zone.

The J. L. Luckenbach, before she became actively embroiled with the Imperial German Navy, was proceeding uneventfully with her holds full of merchandise not intended for the bottom of the sea. Shortly after breakfast a suspicious steamer was reported abeam. The commander of the navy gun crew scrambled aloft for a look through his binoculars and recognized the stranger as a submarine running on the surface with a gun ready for action. This captain of the gunners, a chief boatswain's mate, was still in the rigging when the U-boat opened fire at long range and the shell fell short. Evidently the purpose was to sink the Luckenbach in this fashion and so save a costly torpedo.

The American bluejackets were ready for action and returned the fire with their two guns, fore and aft. Immediately thereafter the engagement became animated on both sides. The submarine closed in to two thousand yards, at which easy distance she should have riddled the big mark of a merchantman in a few minutes. The German gunners, from their narrow, rolling platform, fired as fast as they could reload. Their industry was much better than their execution, for more than two hundred shells were aimed at the Luckenbach and only nine clean hits scored.

The Yankee gunners failed to destroy the submarine, but they were seriously handicapped. The target was small, for the U-boat was almost awash and exposed little more than a conning-tower and

strip of deck. And it was not easy to spot and train with accuracy aboard the poor old Luckenbach which was shaken and gutted by exploding shells every few minutes. Early in the fight a shell exploded in the gun crew's quarters and set the ship afire. The shot smashed the water-main so that no hose could be stretched and all hands had to turn to and save the ship.

Another shell burst near the stern and put the after gun fairly out of commission.

"It was a very lively scene," reported the chief boatswain's mate. "Pieces of shell were falling all around the deck. Two shots landed on the port side forward, striking the oilers' room and putting a large hole in the side; one landed on the port side at the water-line, hitting the fresh-water tank and destroying most of the fresh-water supply. Another landed in the petty officers' mess-room and exploded, ruining the ash-hoist, and bursting the steam pipe, also wounding a mess boy and a fireman.

"One shot passed through the weather-screen on the bridge and landed in the cargo, exploding, but not starting a fire. Pieces of shell hit V. Louther, one of the armed guard, in three places. One of the ship's crew, who was carrying ammunition forward, was hit. Another shell exploded in the engine-room, wounding the first and third engineers and disabling the engines. Bell, one of the gun's crew, was going up the forward ladder carrying ammunition when the shell that landed in the quartermaster's

room exploded, the fumes blinding him for two hours.

"The ship's crew behaved creditably, and showed cheerful willingness to pass ammunition. Great praise is due the men of the armed guard for the manner in which they performed their duty. The men stationed at the guns never flinched. When the after gun was crippled by the enemy the pointers went to the forward gun and relieved one another, as one hundred and sixty-seven rounds were fired from this gun."

It was a plucky but hopeless battle against odds. The submarine had all the advantage of it, the ship disabled and unable to manœuvre, one gun out of action, and with no hope of fleeing out of torpedo range. The spirit was still unbroken, and the gunner who was hit three times by pieces of shrapnel refused to leave his post. His brief speech was not in the official report, possibly because it required expurgation, but the tenor of it was that no —— —— of a —— Hun could make him quit for a little thing like that.

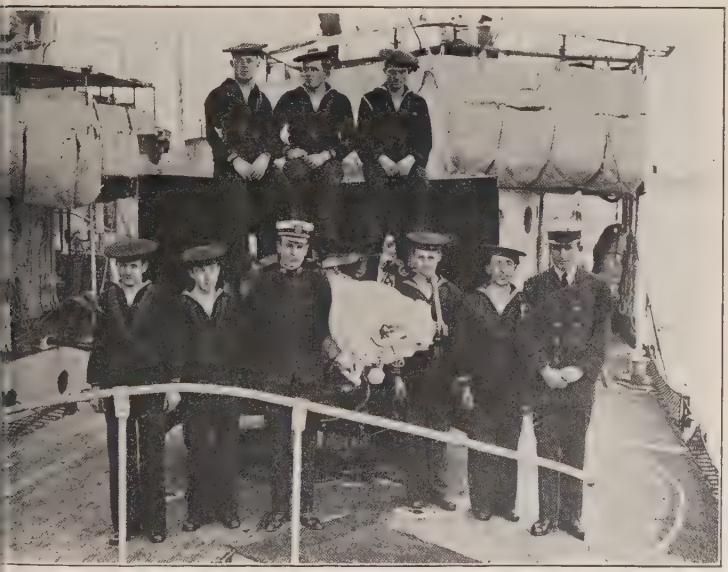
The wireless operator was also a young man of resolution and a born optimist. He had begun sending out distress calls at once, and they were picked up by an American destroyer thirty minutes after the action opened. There followed a wireless dialogue which is worth quoting *verbatim*. It needs no comment: —

From Luckenbach,	8.05 A.M.	"S.O.S. Lat. —— Long. ——. Gunned by submarine."
Destroyer		"Am coming to your assistance."
Luckenbach,	9.29 A.M.	"We are manœuvring around."
Luckenbach,	9.38 A.M.	"Code-book overboard now. How far are you?"
Destroyer,	9.39 A.M.	"Two hours south."
Luckenbach,	9.40 A.M.	"Shelling us now. Look out for our boats."
Destroyer,	9.41 A.M.	"Don't surrender."
Luckenbach,	9.42 A.M.	"Surrender never."
Luckenbach,	10.15 A.M.	"Still afloat and fighting. Sub is firing at our antennæ."
Destroyer,	10.52 A.M.	"If practicable make smoke."
Luckenbach,	10.53 A.M.	"Still gunning us."
Destroyer,	11.05 A.M.	"Course south magnetic."

The destroyer was climbing up out of the south under forced draft, going thirty knots and pelting through the seas instead of over them. There was a long swell and little wind. At eleven o'clock a trailing banner of smoke from the Luckenbach's funnel was sighted and shortly after the destroyer opened on the submarine with her forward gun. The bow tore into a huge, green swell which broke on deck and swept the gun crew aft, heels overhead. They clawed their way back and slammed another shell into the breach to let the Hun know that they were on their way. The submarine tarried not, but clapped her gunners under hatches and was seen no more on the heaving surface of the Atlantic. There were safer places when an irate destroyer came charging down to ram and shoot and drop the merry depth-bomb.

The destroyer commander promptly sent his sur-

OFFICERS OF A FIGHTING AMERICAN DESTROYER



A GUN'S CREW ON U.S.S. ——

geon on board to attend the wounded men. Here began the second chapter of the adventures of the . L. Luckenbach in the war-zone and the hero was his expert in pills and bandages, officially rated as Assistant Surgeon E. L. Rice, U.S.N., better known o the ward-room as "Doc." The destroyer left him n the steamer in order that he might look after his wounded patients for the remainder of the voyage to France. A quartermaster, Shay by name, went with im from his own ship. There was never a good yarn f action without a Kelly or Burke or Shay in it.

This competent, versatile young surgeon wrote report which is a model of reticence. Far be it rom him to dwell on the fact that he took command of the Luckenbach and brought her safely nto Havre. A destroyer man is presumed to be able o turn his hand to anything. Why brag about it? The navy quartermaster, who acted as first assistant, was not surprised, of course. It was all in the lay's work. There are glimpses of the situation in he surgeon's bald report, such paragraphs as: —

> The eight injured men were dressed and the shrapnel extracted. . . . When getting under way to resume voyage, the captain of the Luckenbach appeared dazed and incompetent to handle his ship. By my direction the signals received by the navy quartermaster were explained to the ship and she was handled accordingly. The quartermaster and myself stood watch on the bridge until midnight and took charge of the ship when a tramp steamer bore down on our port bow at about eleven P.M. . . .

After talking with various members of the ship's company and the armed guard, I am of the opinion that the captain of the Luckenbach wished to haul down his colors and abandon the ship during the engagement with the submarine and was prevented from doing so by the chief petty officer in command of the navy gun crew who dictated the radio saying that the ship would never surrender. . . .

I was on the Luckenbach four days and believe that the Chief Boatswain's Mate, Bulger, who stood in the most exposed places on the ship during the entire action, deserves special mention as also does V. E. Louther, seaman, who did not leave his gun after he had been injured three times. . . .

Having taken stock of the situation, the doctor decided to disrate the merchant skipper for the time and rule the ship as the only commissioned officer of the United States Navy on board. The Navy had saved her from the submarine and it seemed to be distinctly up to the Navy to finish the job and carry her into port. Otherwise the elderly skipper might conclude to desert the Luckenbach and order the crew into the boats. He was in a panicky state of mind about the bulkheads which he thought might give way at any moment. Even after the destroyer had been sighted, he had insisted on sending out hysterical signals, "We are disabled!" "We are on fire!" "We have wounded men!"

This low-spirited mariner was advised to rest and compose his mind while the doctor paced the bridge

the faithful quartermaster at his elbow. They knew precious little navigation between them, but they aimed for the coast of France and unexpectedly hit it, putting the ship ashore and floating off on the next tide with no damage. And so the Luckenbach steamed into Havre, with the doctor in command and a quartermaster with a twinkle in his eye who hummed a snatch of the song which proclaims that "Admiral Sims' flotilla is the terror of the sea."

CHAPTER V

THE NAVY ASHORE IN IRELAND

HOW fares the American navy man ashore while on this foreign service? He has friends and folks at home who are anxious to know. When the destroyer casts off and leaves the harbor it is all work and no play, duty as exacting as a naval force was ever called upon to perform. The sailors' letters are censored by an officer of the ship, and he is permitted to tell so little real news that he falls into the rut of "I am well and hope this will find you the same."

Homesickness is his most serious complaint. He is of a different type of navy man from the traditional flat-foot of a generation or two ago, and almost extinct is the briny veteran of the gun deck whose service recalled the days of sails and tall spars and who was unashamed of his reputation as a tough customer when he had tucked a few drinks under his belt.

Even in the big ships these hardy relics are few and far between, while the destroyer fleet finds no use for them whatever. Nowhere can you find a cleaner, smarter, more self-respecting and efficient class of men than the petty officers and chief petty officers of the modern American Navy. They are

AMERICAN DESTROYERS IN BRITISH WATERS PREPARING FOR THE SEAS

the backbone of the service and they set the pace for the men who serve directly under them.

The sailors are mostly wholesome youngsters, very boyish in appearance, who were sent from the recruiting officers to the naval training schools and thence to the battleship fleet or straight to the destroyer flotillas. Many of them had never seen salt water until their first cruise. They come from good homes, from people who are proud of them and their service. In the old navy you were much more apt to find the rover whose domestic ties were tenuous and who was at home where he slung his hammock, whether aboard a receiving ship at the Brooklyn Yard or off for a three years' cruise on the China station.

These thousands of fine boys of ours who are afloat in the war-zone are not accustomed to exile, and it seems a long, long road to New York or Chicago or Kansas City. Shore liberty meant something when they were among their own kind, and there was always the blithe anticipation of a few days' leave and permission to journey home. Sending them back from the war-zone is difficult to arrange and they must make the best of it.

Ambition and the feeling that it is a privilege to be playing the big game are the factors which check discontent. Promotion is rapid, and the youngster aspires to be a petty officer with the hope of winning an ensign's commission as a goal by no means beyond his reach. He discovers that the

commander of his destroyer is quick to discern the lad with the right stuff in him and anxious to give him every chance of advancement.

These are some of the reasons why the country can feel pride and confidence in the behavior of the navy on foreign service. The record has been extraordinarily good. There was a certain division of American ships which sent ashore six thousand men for a day's liberty. When they returned aboard there were *three* arrests for drunkenness and *three* for overstaying leave. Compare this with an American university town the night after a championship football match and the balance is rather in favor of the navy, don't you think?

When the destroyers came to their base in Ireland they found a city and people which interested them until the novelty waned. Then they discovered that when they were allowed ashore there was no place to go. Getting drunk was not a popular pastime, although every facility was offered. England had severely restricted the liquor traffic, as a war measure, permitting the saloons to remain open only a few hours in the day. There were no restrictions in Ireland, however, and the public houses were in full blast, dirty, frowsy little places where the native loafers congregated.

The average bluejacket preferred something more decent and comfortable than these crowded back rooms. Those who called themselves the "real gobs," and affected a lofty scorn for any attempts to

better their welfare ashore, might esteem it a rugged virtue to get pickled, but this was a rough road to travel and there were other penalties besides a headache in the morning.

As soon as the street lamps were lighted, squads of the American navy patrol began to stroll about, swinging short, heavy sticks with a loop at one end and displaying no sympathy whatever for the shipmate who steered a zigzag course in imitation of a destroyer working offshore or who loudly announced that he could whip any three "Limies" that ever trod a British deck. Alas, for his desire to start something. He was smothered before he got under way. The town police merely looked on, for the navy patrol mobilized with celerity and the occasional offender proceeded under forced draft to a secure haven.

American residents of London were quick to realize what the navy needed and generously subscribed twenty thousand dollars for a club-house and equipment. It was not for officers, but for the enlisted men, to be conducted under their own management and named "The United States Naval Men's Club." There was not the slightest flavor of charity or patronage. It was an enterprise which won tremendous popularity from the start. There was a stage and a large moving-picture theatre, a library, baths, a dormitory where a man might sleep ashore, a restaurant which drove a terrific trade in "hot dogs," doughnuts, sandwiches, coffee,

eggs, real steaks, and unlimited pie, and served as many as four hundred meals in a day. The band and the orchestra from the flagship played on two evenings a week, all the musicians being enlisted men and amateurs. They displayed remarkable talent, and it was stirring to hear them lead a chorus five hundred strong in the songs that the sailor loves.

The printed programme of one of the Saturday night entertainments affords a glimpse of the navy during its infrequent hours of liberty in a foreign port. On the first page of the leaflet are these spirited verses which are strictly after the fact: —

The Destroyer

By day and night she makes her way
  Through seas that crash across her bows.
Mast-high she hurls the driving spray,
  Through mountain waves she ploughs.
About her as she dashes by,
  A thousand dangers lurk unseen,
Where mines lie hidden from the eye,
  Where waits the submarine.

Still on she drives across the sea,
  The sport of laughing wind and wave:
So small, so frail a craft is she
  The tempest's wrath to brave!
Forth, without fear or call for rest,
  She goes to draw the foeman's fangs,
While on the issue of her quest
  The fate of nations hangs!

J. H. Yates

AMERICAN NAVAL MEN'S CLUB IN IRELAND

BRITISH AND AMERICAN SAILORS AT THE OPENING OF A UNITED STATES SAILORS' CLUB AT AMERICA'S NAVAL BASE

THE NAVY ASHORE IN IRELAND

There follows on the programme this diverting assemblage of artistry:

Overture, Battle Song of Liberty .....The Orchestra
Dustin Farnum in Five Reel Feature DAVY CROCKETT
Selection, My Sunshine Jane.....The Orchestra
CONJURER LANCE-CORPORAL HORTOPP
Scotch Reel .....The Black Watch
Singing .....By All Hands
Bursting Into Society .....One Reel
NATIONAL ANTHEMS.....The Orchestra

Lance-Corporal Hortopp was a professional conjurer before he enlisted in the Black Watch, a battalion of which is stationed not far from the port. A score of his comrades have come to see him do his turn and they sociably mingle with the crowd of jovial American sailors. Sprinkled here and there are men of the Royal Navy and in the gallery sit officers of the Black Watch, wearing tartan bonnets and kilts, and lieutenants from British ships-of-war with the gold loop on their sleeves.

The British Admiral himself enters unobtrusively, having stipulated that the men should not rise or otherwise pay attention to his presence. He has been promoted since the destroyers first came to Queenstown and is no longer a Vice-Admiral, but a full Admiral of the British Navy with another glittering stripe that carries the broad bands almost from cuff to elbow. When the honor came to him the destroyer captains called at Admiralty House, as many of them as were in port, to present their

enthusiastic congratulations. He received them with a demeanor undismayed, but later confessed that such things were really more trying to a man's courage than leading a fleet into action.

The Black Watch is putting its best foot forward for the sailormen's club on this particular night. Lance-Corporal Hortopp's trained and nimble fingers have not been spoiled by rifle drill and his tricks with cards are thunderously applauded. Then four other kilted non-coms dance themselves breathless, with all the agile flourishes and graces of the Highlands, and their own pipers furnish the music.

A fleeting interlude of war! Soon the battalion of the Black Watch will be crossing to join the British line in Flanders and the destroyer crews must turn seaward to run the gauntlet of the unseen torpedo.

The club restaurant is an excellent place to talk with the American sailor about his impressions of men and things in this service that seems so remote from home. When he first came over he regarded the British bluejacket with a certain reserve, not unfriendly, but critical and ready for trouble if it had to be. In other days when ships of the two navies met in port there was the probability of a ruction. The feeling was not so much a grudge as a tradition, and it may have harked back to Bunker Hill.

"Whatever the reason was, we were liable to mix it up," said a chief petty officer of the destroyer

fleet. "Maybe there was no excuse at all. The Britishers said we were all bluff and brag, and we thought the same of them, both nations being chesty by nature. Over here it's different. We got well acquainted with each other for the first time, having to live side by side and being busy on the same job. They are easy enough to get along with when you break under the crust, and they found we did something besides blow about ourselves. They deliver the goods and you never find them sidestepping a job because it's hard. So we're hooked up fast together until we trim the Hun to a frazzle."

When it came to fraternizing with the Irish natives of the port, the American sailor suffered disillusions, and his views of conditions, political and social, were radically changed. There were hundreds of Irish-Americans in the destroyers. One could not imagine a fighting ship without them, but they, too, lost much of that sympathy for down-trodden, martyred Ireland which had been absorbed at home. It would be foolish to gloss the situation over. The American fleet was insulted, jeered, and regarded as a hostile force because it had sailed across the sea to help England in the common cause against the enemy.

This attitude was naturally resented, nor did it help matters when publicly, from the pulpit of the cathedral, these officers and sailors were denounced as dissolute ruffians who had invaded Ireland like vultures, ready to corrupt the young men and rav-

ish the young women. Such monstrous falsehoods as these were commonly believed. They were spread deliberately, flaming the spirit of the American visitors into open hostility. The Irish problem was none of their affair, but they demanded a square deal.

The streets were filled with young Irishmen who refused to volunteer for the war and defied England to conscript them. They paraded and drilled with Sinn Fein banners and talked of armed rebellion, idlers and wasters while the rest of the world strove in blood and tears to save democracy and humanity from obliteration. Here was the significant aspect of it, that these American sailors, candid, simple, open-minded men, had hitherto felt no great love for England, but rather a sentimental leaning toward the wrongs of the Irish. A few weeks in Ireland's ports and waters and they could be heard discussing it in this fashion: —

"Could you beat it? I'm Irish myself, and yet I'd give a month's pay to crack the head of a Sinn Feiner. And they won't let me at him, with a navy patrol at every corner and no chance to get out of town."

"You said it for me. They rake up everything England ever did to them in the past, from the time of Oliver Cromwell. For the love of Mike, says England with her back to the wall, tell me what you want and I'll give it to you. And they can't agree among 'emselves what the divil they do want."

"They would fight each other at the drop of the hat if England left them be, son. You can see it for yourself. Take the old man that's a father to me at home. A hard parent he has been, with a crooked temper and a handy pair of fists. If I found him down on his back with a couple of thugs beating his brains out, do you think I'd kick in his ribs and help them murder him? That's the Sinn Feiner, — the lad that curses us and wants to help the Germans."

"Well, I have no head at all for Parliaments and Conventions and the Rights of Ulster, but the kind of Irish that spit on the Stars and Stripes because we came across to lend a hand, — they can go plumb to hell. How about it?"

"Harkee, Bill, no violence. It's hands off for us, but I'd hate to see another parade go by, — in the green uniforms, I mean, instead of the khaki. It might make me sorry that Jimmy Legs frisked me for a pair of brass knuckles before I came off with this liberty party."

"Some of them had the nerve to ask if we had come to free Ireland, when the first bunch of destroyers made port. They were quite put out about it, — said we had double-crossed 'em."

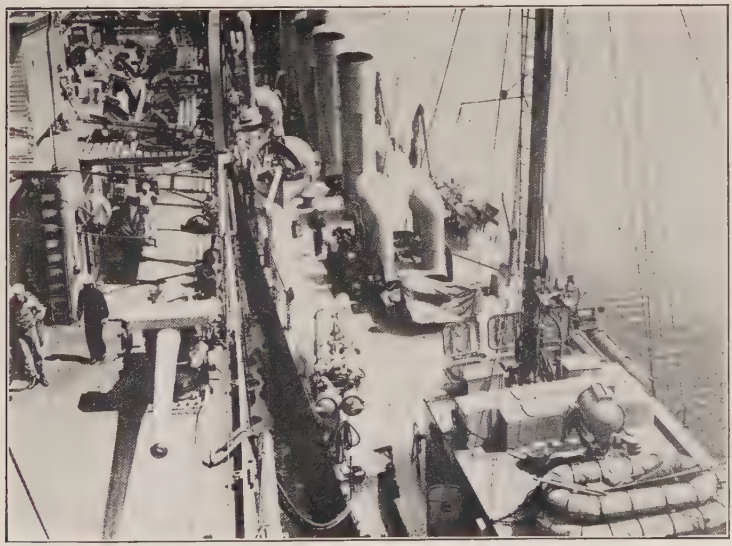
"The prize puzzle of the world, this Irish question, and a man as wise as Daniel Webster could n't make head or tail of it. Let's you and me pass it up."

As one of the diversions of the port, there was

always thrilling gossip in circulation, — stories of adventures at sea that must not be whispered outside of the service, and some of them true. They made the destroyer game seem flat and commonplace, but the Admiralty sternly withheld them from publication. It was inadvisable to disclose them until after the war. They ran through the fleet, nevertheless, — what the mess-room called "hush, hush stuff," — tales of British naval officers who sailed on mysterious errands and, if they returned alive, wore the ribbon of the Victoria Cross on their jackets.

The Gazette omitted all details in the record of their presentation to the King and the bestowal of the "V.C." Why and how they won it was a hidden matter and England wondered and conjectured. The destroyer fleet was wiser, but it held its peace, in honor bound. More than once while dining at Admiralty House, the American commanders met one of these heroes in the flesh, — shy, provokingly reticent men who could never be persuaded to talk about themselves unless the Admiral wilfully prodded them that his other guests might listen. Then they obeyed orders, like the gentlemen that they were, and told wilder romances than fiction would dare invent. The American officers admired, without envy. Given their choice between a gift of millions in money and winning a naval V.C., they would have decided, on the instant. Incidentally, six of them had been recommended by the Admiral

AMERICAN DESTROYERS IN BRITISH WATERS



AMERICAN DESTROYER ALONGSIDE DEPOT SHIP

for the Distinguished Service Order because they had destroyed German submarines, but they seldom mentioned it.

A favorite yarn, with no ban of secrecy, was that of an enemy submarine which crept into an English harbor to drop a cargo of mines. Intent on this unholy task she had halted on the bottom to let a mine slip from its well when a curious "*tap-tap-tap*" was noticed. The sounds seemed to come from the skin of the boat, from outside the hull.

The *tap-tapping* was repeated. All hands listened in silence. The location was unmistakable. It was *not* a machinist's hammer in the engine-room, but something rapping, with a certain methodical reiteration, against the steel shell of the submarine, and it was on the outside.

The crew gazed at one another in blank consternation. Prickles chased up and down their German spines. The phenomenon was uncanny beyond words. The commander cocked his head, again paid attention to the persistent *tap-tap-tap*, and was more amazed than any of them. He understood English, as do most of the submarine officers, and this succession of taps was spelling out a message in the International Morse code.

With an unsteady pencil he wrote it down letter by letter, and the letters grouped themselves into intelligible words. Once more he listened, and the message was indubitably confirmed. His crew, breaking the iron bonds of discipline, had left their

stations and were crowding close to peer over his shoulder. The sinister message ran from lip to lip: —

"*Rise and surrender or depth-charge will be exploded against your hull.*"

There was a moment of horrified hesitation, and then the message was rapped out again, with a resounding emphasis which indicated that it might be the last call. This time it carried a postscript: —

"*Depth-charge has been wired and lowered.*"

The German submarine waited not, but ascended to the surface. The programme of mine-laying was unavoidably postponed. The commander in the conning-tower beheld an armed trawler no more than a hundred yards away which exhibited the greatest surprise at his sudden appearance, as though it were entirely unexpected. This was puzzling, in view of the message rapped out below. The trawler boiled with activity in an instant, however, and a gun crew dashed for the forward deck.

Before the Hun skipper could get his wits together a shell exploded against his conning-tower and dented it in like a tin can. There was no time to submerge and escape. Surrender was inevitable and it was done promptly. The trawler's boats took off the crew and hitched a line to the U-boat. While the commander was demanding, in spluttering accents, some explanation of the performance, there rose from the depths the dripping helmet of a diver. He was hoisted aboard the trawler by the men who

had been tending his pump and air-line, and they unscrewed the helmet and relieved him of his weighty armor.

With a satisfied grin he wiped the sweat from his eyes and beheld the disconsolate crew from the submarine. Addressing the master of the trawler, he vouchsafed: —

"I knew you was wide-awake, Tom, and I could trust you to nail the beggar when he came to the top. I was busy on the wreck of the drifter, makin' ready to patch the hole so she could be raised and pumped out, when this perishin' Hun come past and settled 'imself on the bottom. A gray shadow was what I saw and you did n't have to tell me that mine-layin' was his game."

"Aye, but how did you make him pop up alongside of us?" queried the captain of the trawler.

"It was bright of me, Tom. I 'll get a rating for it. The navy recognizes men like me. I was a signal-man before they made a diver of me. I walks over to this indecent Hun and talks to him with my hammer."

"Talks to him? And how was that?"

"In Morse, you stupid. It was a highly promisin' bet that one of the lot could understand my little piece. If they did n't I would ha' had to send up word to you, but I was set against that. I was on my own, and it meant being recommended by the Admiralty as the bloke that captured a submarine single-handed and alone."

"Where do we come in, you selfish rotter?" exclaimed the trawler man.

"Steady, Tom. I'll be kind enough to divide the prize money with you chaps, but the glory is all mine."

"This Prussian jabbered something about a depth-charge at me, and I could n't see what he was a-drivin' at," said the trawler skipper.

"The depth-charge was in my eye," replied the navy diver. "If you had my bloomin' intellect, Tom, you'd amount to something."

CHAPTER VI

DOWN IN A YANKEE SUBMARINE

SEVERAL months after the event, the Secretary of the Navy announced, in a public address, that American submarines had crossed the ocean to join the active operations of the Allied Naval Forces against the predatory U-boat and share the perilous duty of patrolling the infested areas. Like other naval movements, the news had been kept secret until such time as was advisable to disclose it. Mr. Daniels paid a tribute well deserved to the crews of these gallant submarines of ours which had dared the Atlantic passage in the dead of winter, battling with obstacles that make their story one of the most heroic of the war.

It was my good fortune to visit their base in European waters, at the invitation of the admiral commanding the coast, and to cruise in one of them during its programme of intensive training for the grim business of discovering and stalking the enemy's submarines. The American flotilla was assembled in a spacious bay of a wild and rugged coast where it was easy to slip seaward and where there was depth of water for manœuvres beneath the surface.

When at leisure these industrious craft nestled beside the mother ship to which the crews shifted

for a little while, seeking the bunks, hammocks, and mess-rooms, glad to stretch their weary legs, but never too much exhausted to talk shop. Like the aviator, the submarine man loves his job and would be nowhere else for worlds. This is one of the arrangements of a kindly Providence.

The German dislikes it because he serves under compulsion, with the feeling of servitude and the dread of harsh taskmasters. No dangers and discomforts, however, can dull the ardor of the British and American officers and men in this service. They are delighted to work together as one fleet, dodging and hunting each other in the daily routine of training practice or comparing notes when off duty.

When I joined them, the admiral, who was also a guest, desired to go out in a submarine that flew his own flag, the White Ensign, which was quite proper. I naturally preferred to submerge beneath the Stars and Stripes and hoped to go down with my colors flying. We therefore looked forward to attacking each other and scoring mutual hits with torpedoes whose heads were made harmless for this particular work. To let drive at a British admiral and have him officially scored as blown up was a novel kind of big-game hunting.

Our own submarines had been training zealously in American waters, but, like the troops sent to finish their education in the trenches of France, there was much to be learned in the actual

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AMERICAN SUBMARINES WITH THEIR MOTHER SHIP

school of war from tutors who had been fighting and cruising on the sea and under it for more than three years.

For training purposes, therefore, the flotilla was in charge of the most famous commander of the British Navy, Captain N——, who had taken his own boat through the maze of nets and mines in the Dardanelles and played about in the Sea of Marmora for many weeks, shelling Constantinople by way of diversion, sinking a Turkish battleship under the guns of the forts, sending torpedoes into armed dhows and transports, spreading panic right and left, and enjoying himself most gorgeously. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for this unconventional excursion and, to the eye of a layman, he was fairly entitled to several of them.

The commander of the American submarine, ordered out for a practice run, encased himself in all the warm clothing that could be wriggled into and presently led the way across the narrow decks of the other boats until his own bridge and conning-tower were reached. The lines were cast off and to the muffled beat of the oil engines the submarine slid a long gray back out into the bay. A cold wind whipped the sea beneath a sky sodden and gloomy. Spray flew across the strip of deck upon which two or three sailors moved with sure-footed agility, indifferent to the risk of slipping overboard. They were used to leading the life of acrobats. It was a crew of specialists, every man

trained for his own task, tested in an exacting round of responsibilities in which no one could afford to make mistakes.

A British submarine had moved away from her own depot ship and was also running awash, laying a divergent course. After two or three miles of this, she prepared to go under. One saw the skipper vanish from his bridge, and then the hull seemed to erase itself from the surface as one rubs out a pencil mark. The superstructure sank, swiftly, and there was nothing to be seen but the watching periscopes projecting a foot or two, frequently hidden by the waves, — tiny bits of spar they looked like, vigilant, uncanny.

It was time for us to duck under and play this thrilling game of hide and seek or "find the periscope." There was always the chance that a hostile submarine might casually happen along and join the sport, but *not* with dummy torpedo-heads. The U-boats were inquisitive creatures, occasionally nosing close to the coast on exploring tours. The British and American destroyers had learned to run no risks with a submarine, friend or foe, but attacked her on sight unless identification was instantly certain. Not long before this, a British submarine had been rammed and bombed in these same waters and the destroyers were commended for their prompt and efficient action. The submarine was saved and managed to reach port, but her crew declared that their feelings were worse

hurt than their boat. It did seem like rubbing it in a bit. Even submarines can feel annoyed when their own people are patted on the back for trying to blow them to glory.

"Now, let's see you break the record for a crash dive," said our skipper as he passed the word below to make ready. "The Admiral has his eye clamped to a periscope of that British sub, and his watch is in his fist to time you to a second."

Down came the wireless mast to be stowed and lashed. The propulsive power was shifted from the surface engines to the silent, smoothly running electric motors. Tight and stripped, the buoyant steel shell of a submarine was prepared to plunge under. The ballast tanks began to take in water and the deck settled lower as the tide rises on a rock, until the bridge resembled an islet unsubmerged.

It was time to squeeze through the conning-tower hatch and go below. Last to descend was the skipper, who closed and screwed down the round hatch-plate above him. It was always the final ceremony, the crew keeping an eye on the ladder for the sight of those long legs in sea-boots to tell them that the boat was sealed and about to seek her diving trim.

With almost no sound or sense of motion and at a gentle slant the submarine sank to twenty-six feet and hung there poised to get her bearings for a torpedo attack. Now, the balance and flota-

tion of one of these boats when under water is a very delicate problem. She is almost as sensitive as a toy balloon, and to keep her on an even keel, at the depth required, demands skilful juggling with valves and pumps and horizontal rudders.

The skipper took his station at one of the periscopes, where there was a small, cleared space in the complexity of machinery that fairly crowded the brilliantly lighted interior from end to end. Gently, patiently, he nursed his boat until she was properly trimmed. A little water was forced out of one of the many ballast-tank compartments, more admitted somewhere else, and the orders followed each other like this: —

"Crack the main line."

"Open four and seven."

"Close two and five."

"Is that valve open?"

"Then start the pump."

Two petty officers sat upon stools in front of the large dials of the depth-gauges and watched the needles move responsive to the slight movements of the boat which swam so lightly in her fluid element. They held her at twenty-six feet by turning the handles which controlled the horizontal rudders at bow and stern. The whirring sound of these controls was all that disturbed the tense silence within the boat after the commander had finished the task of trimming her. The motors had been stopped. The men spoke in low tones which

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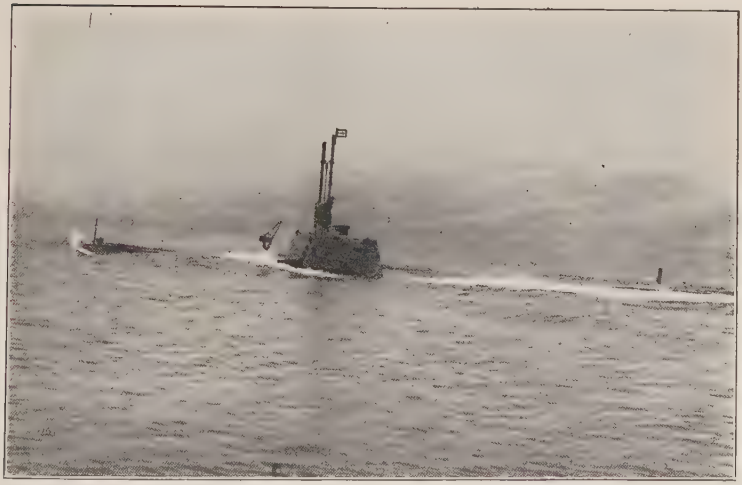
Submerged



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Coming up

AN AMERICAN SUBMARINE

seemed habitual. They were profoundly preoccupied with what they had to do. This attitude of concentration was part of the trade. Men whose wits are apt to wander have no place in a fighting submarine.

The danger in which these men lived and toiled was not so insistent an impression as the chill, unremitting discomfort of it. When on tours of sea duty they endured it, — that is the only word, — and were never thoroughly, comfortably warmed until they fetched port again. There is no more miserable feeling than this, to be always on the point of shivering and in a space so cramped that physical exercise to stir the blood is impossible.

There was no such luxury as sleeping or living rooms. The three officers had bunks in one of the open spaces and a table for meals. The men slept on the floor, in nooks and corners among the intricate and numerous machines which filled the boat, or suspended hammocks in impossible places and slept like bats dangling from the roof of a shed. They cooked, after a fashion, on an electric stove, and kept the coffee-pot going as the chief solace. There were no complaints. That a man in a submarine should complain about anything is a patent absurdity.

Gazing into the eye-piece of the periscope, the roughened sea was disclosed with startling distinctness, and the small image of a trawler which

was passing in from sea after finishing her stint of mine-sweeping. Our skipper was watching and biding his time, warily searching for a glimpse of his target, the British submarine, ready to swing and bring his bow tubes to bear. Crouching in the confined space far forward, the torpedo gunners flooded a tube and stood by the gearing.

"Stand by! I've got her!" shouted the skipper.

The pressure of a finger on a trigger and he fired the terrific missile from where he stood. There was a loud, long hiss of compressed air expanding as it drove the torpedo from the tube. Nothing more than this. It was strange to realize that the crew of a submarine, barring the commander or executive officer at the periscope, never sees the destruction it wreaks. Sometimes they feel the shock of the explosion, if the torpedo finds its mark and strikes a ship, but even this is curiously uncertain. A British commander, who had a fine total of twelve hits against German submarines and ships-of-war, said of his own experience: —

"In every case the sound of the explosion varied. In some instances it was very violent, a loud crack or a heavy rumbling; in others a slight thud, barely audible against the boat's side. A big explosion might be seen through the periscope and nothing at all heard inside the boat."

Having done her best to score a bull's-eye, the American submarine blew her ballast tanks and rose to the surface, poking up a dripping bridge

while the water gushed from the openings in her false deck. Soon the British boat emerged a half-mile away and signalled that she had been theoretically destroyed, and all hands lost including the admiral. Our skipper grinned for joy as he danced a jig on his box of a bridge to warm his freezing toes. Another dive and a second shot were ordered.

The other boat headed to pass close aboard on the surface and the cheery young British commander bawled through a megaphone that his own torpedo had gone insane, or something like that, and was chasing its tail in circles when last seen. They would have to wait and muck about to find the silly thing. The admiral sent his compliments and "well done." He was having a ripping time, so he said, and seemed very keen to put out to sea on his own and try to bag a Hun. This would n't do, of course, — one could n't carry admirals about when one was really playing tag with old Fritz, — but it showed a sportin' spirit — quite top-hole.

Down below, the American engineer officer and the navigator found time to chat. They were almost wistfully pleased to have a visitor aboard who could talk "United States" with them. They had seen nothing of the war afloat beyond their own round of drill and duty in this remote and isolated arm of the sea. Soon they would be engaged in the regular patrol service, the long excursions of many days and nights away from the

base, work from which not a few British submarines had failed to return and were stricken from the list as missing with all hands.

This prospect seemed not all perturbing. It would be more comfortable to cruise in larger boats, but crews which had pulled through that mid-winter voyage across the Atlantic could put up with almost anything. As for tackling the U-boats, it was better than an even break. They would rather run than fight another submarine, so the British had found out in the North Sea. You might get bumped off if they saw you first and slipped one into you, and the mines were a nuisance. There was a lot of luck in it.

"The big trick is that we are over here, and in the show," said the navigator, as he pulled his muffler around his chin. "People at home read so much false alarm stuff about the navy before the war that they were inclined to believe our submarines were n't fit to go to sea in. It 's a great pity we did n't have more of them, of course, but the English were caught napping in the same way. It was awfully hard to realize that the big ships — the Fleet — had ceased to be the ace card for active operations against the enemy. As it turned out, this is a war of destroyers and submarines."

"That voyage over of yours," I suggested. "Sailing in December must have been —"

"It was hell-and-repeat," affirmed the engineer officer, as one who stated nothing more than the

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A TORPEDO LEAVING THE TUBE ON THE U.S. DESTROYER PARKER

fact. "'Sailing in December' — yes, that tells most of it. A cold winter and plenty of climate off the Atlantic coast, as you may have heard."

"This unfortunate submarine flotilla was iced up and blown away pretty nearly from one end of the ocean to the other," came from the navigator. "There were tugs with it, and a mother ship, — to tow us in bad weather and play the fond parent, — but they had all they could do to stay afloat themselves, and they just naturally lost some of us. A few gales of a hundred miles an hour, and little things like that, could n't help disorganizing the programme."

"It was like the ten little niggers that you count out in rhyme. A merchant steamer sighted one of the flotilla off our own coast and took it for a Hun. This intelligent steamer promptly threw a fit and tried to ram the submarine. In order to save itself from being cut in two, the submarine had to ram the steamer. This necessitated putting back to port to have a new bow built to replace the old one which was crumpled up like an old hat. This done, the boat started out again."

"She was n't the only one that had to go home to refit and buck into it once more," the story went on. "They turned up in ports a thousand miles from their course, in need of fuel, stores, and repairs. Nothing against the boats, you understand. It was all in their favor that they were ever heard of again. It was one tremendous gale after another,

weather that was smashing the life out of cruisers and battleships."

"A submarine can't stay submerged and duck a storm, as some people mistakenly imagine," explained the navigator. "It's all nonsense, for one thing, to suppose that we can run under water for any long distance on the motors. They use up the storage batteries too rapidly and then you have to come to the surface and charge them. Then, too, the air gets bad after fifteen or twenty hours of being sealed up. On a voyage of any length you must do mostly surface running with your oil engines."

"Believe me, a submarine can roll, too," sadly observed the engineer officer. "The destroyers have nothing on us. And we roll when we are submerged in a heavy sea-way. We got iced up so heavily coming across that the old boat was top-heavy, liable to roll clean over and keep on revolving. There was no living on deck, of course. We managed to open the hatch for fresh air now and then, but a big sea usually slopped in and flooded the place. The point is that every blessed boat of the flotilla kept pegging away for her destination, even though she might be blown off in some other direction. If the war would only last long enough we were bound to get in it."

"One boat lost the tugs, the mother ship, and her course for the Azores where she was ordered to make a stop. She refused to fool about on the

job any longer. What was the use? Her skipper simply hooked up and went to it — aiming for his base on this side of the ocean. He did it all by himself and made an eighteen-day, solitary voyage of it and reported all well, just as Admiral Sims and the rest of them were beginning to lose sleep over him. Hundred-mile gales and weather below zero do *not* spell the happy life in a submarine, with three thousand miles to go."

"Here, don't think he's growling about it," hastily interposed the engineer officer. "He's just telling you. There are certain little things we'd like to have, just to make the boats do better work, but there are no personal kicks coming. This is the life! And there are poor, misguided officers in the Fleet at home who actually feel sorry for us."

There were petty officers in this indomitable crew who had been in submarines from the beginning, who had served their time in the Porpoise and Viper class before shifting into the larger boats, who had cruised in the Caribbean and the Pacific. This was all they knew of the Navy — these years of intimate association with the strange craft that prowl under the sea and lie in ambush. The Navy used to treat them slightingly, as an unavoidable encumbrance, an adjunct of dubious value, but the submarine has come into its own.

Earlier in the winter I had been out in a British submarine that cruised on patrol from a North Sea base. The day's work of the boats stationed

in those waters, during the last two years, may help you to picture to yourself the sort of duty that is expected of the American flotilla on active service in the war-zone. While the destroyer ranges the surface of the sea to hunt and blot out the German pirates, another kind of warfare, secretive and desperately hazardous, has been waged for the same purpose.

For obvious reasons the British Admiralty makes public no record of the toll it takes of the enemy's craft, nor has it indicated the means employed. The German ports of the North Sea and the Belgian coast can know only that so many of their submarines departed with high hopes of *strafing* merchant vessels and never came back. The mystery and suspense thereof are not good for the morale of the other German crews that await their turns. It is permitted to say that not a few of these disasters have been the work of British submarines, which learned quite early in the war that the Hun could be stalked under the water and outwitted at his own particular game.

He has no great taste or aptitude for this kind of strategy, much preferring to dive and dodge and gain the open sea where he cannot be cornered and compelled to fight back. His quarry is the cargo ship and his sole object the destruction of tonnage and supplies. So long as the British or American submarine will let him alone, he will never go out of his way to look for trouble.

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AN AMERICAN SUBMARINE ON THE SURFACE

When surprised and attacked, he is very likely to get the worst of it, as the records of the Admiralty show. As a weapon of offense, used against hostile submarines in strictly naval warfare, the U-boat has failed to achieve what was expected of it, and this phase of its activity has been distinctly inglorious.

The British submarine patrol mostly concerns itself with trying to intercept the enemy when coming and going near his own ports where his routes converge, and then with attacking him by means of torpedo or shell-fire, ramming him if possible, and endeavoring always to drive him under and into the perils of nets and mines among which he must blindly grope. It is easy to comprehend why the North Sea must be the area in which this extraordinary business is largely carried on.

The patrol has other duties, to watch and investigate neutral shipping from Holland, Norway, and Sweden, to overhaul the innocent lugger and the trawler with a hidden gun, to discourage German mine-sweepers, and to capture or sink the enemy's merchant ships which may venture to make a run of it along the coast, and frequently get caught at it. Targets more worth while are sighted now and then, a German destroyer flotilla or a cruiser squadron bound out for a short practice cruise, while in Heligoland Bight there is always the chance of an encounter to break the monotony.

It is the duel of submarine against submarine, however, which most thrillingly dispels the cheerless drudgery of the submarine patrol, a sport royal to make the crew forget its manifold discomforts. Disappointments are frequent, for it is one thing to catch a glimpse of the enemy and quite another to close with him before he submerges and leaves no trail.

A British submarine may cruise on its appointed station through one tour after another, week in and week out, and return home empty-handed, but there is always the expectation of getting a Hun next time, and the consolation of hearing how the other chap potted his U-boat with a torpedo which exploded fair and square.

The North Sea in winter is not as cold as the Atlantic, but its gales are even more sudden and boisterous. The American flotilla encountered the additional hardship of ice during its memorable crossing, and it was far distant from a harbor of refuge, but otherwise the ordeal resembled that of the winter patrol in the North Sea.

When I visited the most important submarine base on the east coast of England, many boats were resting between trips. Their officers lingered at breakfast in the spacious ward-room of the depot ship, very young men with pleasant, almost shy manners, anxious to be obliging, but finding it awkwardly difficult to talk about their trade. This was partly a matter of racial temperament,

partly the reticence habitual to the British Navy, which believes that what it does is nobody's business but its own.

Really, there was n't much to tell about, in the opinion of one of these ingenuous young commanders. You took your boat out for so many days, and if you were lucky and did n't get done in by a mine or a bomb or strand yourself on a shoal while pokin' about, you wandered back and were jolly glad of it. If you met a Hun you pulled up your socks and let the blighter have it before he groused you. How was America getting on with the war, and when did she expect to send another lot of submarines over to join up with the show? Here was something they were all frightfully interested in.

There had been many changes in the company that sat at this long ward-room table, vacant chairs from time to time when it was officially reported to the Admiralty that a certain submarine was six days overdue and it was regretted that she must be considered lost. Her officers had gone away with careless farewells to their friends. They had paid the price, which is to vanish without a trace. In this the submarine trade differs from that of the fighting aviator or the destroyer's crew. The misfortune of war almost invariably means that there are no survivors to tell the tale of what befell.

This group of British submarine skippers were

genuinely anxious to please. Their courtesy was flawless. They raked their memories for yarns that might be interesting. Their demeanor was slightly apologetic — as if there was the risk of boring a stranger with these commonplace, everyday experiences of the patrol.

"I can't say I'm fond of browsin' around among a lot of mines," remarked one of them, by way of saying something. "One is n't always sure where they are. We fouled a Hun mine a month or so ago and it made me a bit nervous to hear the thing go bumping along the side. It was very apt to go off, you know. In fact, that was what it was there for. We came to the top in rather a hurry, and the mine followed us up, as sociable as a kitten. It floated in our wake until we cleared it. Then the gunner blew it up. Our propeller had been caught in the mooring-cable, I fancy, and wangled it about until the mooring parted. It made the crew a trifle jumpy, but one could n't blame them very severely."

"Mines are a nuisance," agreed another of the party, "but it's almost as irritating to be bombed and shot at by your friends. It's bound to occur, of course. They can't be expected to wait and exchange photographs with you or ask the time of day. A British light cruiser squadron took a look-see at us and there was no chance to wave a flag at her. We dived sixty feet and hunted a hole, but these energetic cruisers passed directly over

us as we were going down, and you could hear the beat of their screws. We were still diving like a rabbit when the beggars began to waste depth-charges on us.

"There was the devil of an explosion which broke the lamp glasses in the boat and put out about fifty lights. We were getting properly fed up with the thing so we blew rapidly and came to the surface. I flew up to the top of the conning-tower and passionately flourished a white ensign just as they began shooting at us from a four-point-seven battery. A keen lot, those light cruisers, but their manners are rotten. They lacked the decency to signal an apology."

Some one mentioned an exploit which has gone the rounds, more or less, and is current among naval men in the United States — the dashing cruise of the British submarine commander who left his patrol station in violation of orders and followed a division of German destroyers through the secret channel of their own mine-fields and entered a hostile port somewhere on the North Sea coast.

There he came up for a squint and saw a large and elegant ocean-going submarine just returning from a voyage, crew cheering on deck, the populace waving welcomes from the shore. He interfered with the celebration by blowing the submarine to fragments with two torpedoes, after which he miraculously found his way out through

the mine-fields again. German destroyers, trawlers, sweepers, and what-not, swarmed after him, filled with the *furor Teutonicus*.

Now, the batteries of this incredibly audacious British submarine had run low and it was out of the question to travel far under water. The commander, therefore, concluded to snuggle close to the bottom and wait for nightfall to rise to the surface and endeavor to escape to safer waters. Wires and chains and grapples were dragging to locate him and several times they scraped along the hull. This noise was unpleasant, not to say alarming, so in order to divert the crew he set the phonograph to playing its liveliest and loudest airs.

He extricated himself from the trap and returned to his patrol station, but the sensational achievement was not recommended as a safe precedent for other commanders. The hero was reprimanded for leaving his station without permission, although his own superior officer commented, in a report to the Admiralty: —

> Lieutenant V—— is a very able and gallant submarine officer, and while there is no possible excuse for his having disregarded his orders and proceeded to ——, it is submitted that his skilful and successful attack on the German submarine and his subsequent conduct, especially during the critical time when he was being swept for by destroyers with explosive sweeps, may be taken into consideration.

Now, this is how the young man reported his adventure, and it is notable as a model of true British reticence: —

Sighted hostile submarine.
Torpedoed submarine amidships.
Submarine seen to blow up and disappear.
Put down immediately by destroyer and was fired at by her.
Went to bottom in eighteen fathoms.
While lying on bottom heard loud underwater explosions.
Destroyers sweeping for us all day.

CHAPTER VII

SUBMARINE AGAINST U-BOAT

CRUISING awash or submerged with the periscopes up, resting at the surface in the darkness to breathe and recharge batteries, or sitting tight down below and listening for the humming noise of a steamer's propellers or the perilous swish of a sweep-wire, — such is the life of the submarine on patrol. Even for tours of a few days at a stretch it takes it out of the strongest men. Their nerves cannot help feeling it, cheery and impassive though they may appear, and the hardships of the existence are certain to drain their vitality. They are most superbly doing their bit, and both England and America should be proud of them.

Far more wearing must be the long cruises of the German boats in the wide reaches of the North Atlantic during low temperatures and heavy gales. It is some small comfort to know that the Hun suffers a Hades of his own during his three or four weeks out from port. His pluck and fortitude, in this respect, are undeniable, and none would be quicker to recognize it than the men of the British submarine service if the record had not been so unspeakably sullied and disgraced. Fritz would be a satisfactory enemy and they could heartily

respect him if he fought fair instead of playing a dirty, unsportsmanlike game from start to finish.

When one finds difficulty in persuading these amazing young Britons who roam the North Sea to discuss their own exploits, it is almost as entertaining to explore the records of the Admiralty and find the romances that lie buried amid the heaps of routine documents. When not at sea with the ships of the Allied Forces, this was one of my favorite occupations. As a sample, this is a narrative not easy to surpass for crowded moments: —

While diving, struck with great force another submarine also diving. As soon as we struck, I perceived the periscope of this other submarine through my own periscope, forward and to port. I at once ordered full speed and as the submarine which we had rammed and apparently overridden was coming to the surface and forcing us up with her at the same time, I gave the order, "Prepare to dive," and "Flood internal main ballast."

During the next minute and a half, there were several blows on our port side as the hostile submarine came aft and we rose to twelve feet by the gauges. Then she apparently ceased her efforts to rise and I saw her periscope appear on my quarter. The U-boat appeared to be much down by the bows, with a list to starboard, and was evidently sinking.

I now had negative buoyancy and my hydroplane forward became jammed. It was some four minutes before I had blown my internal main ballast and once more regained the surface, my vessel having

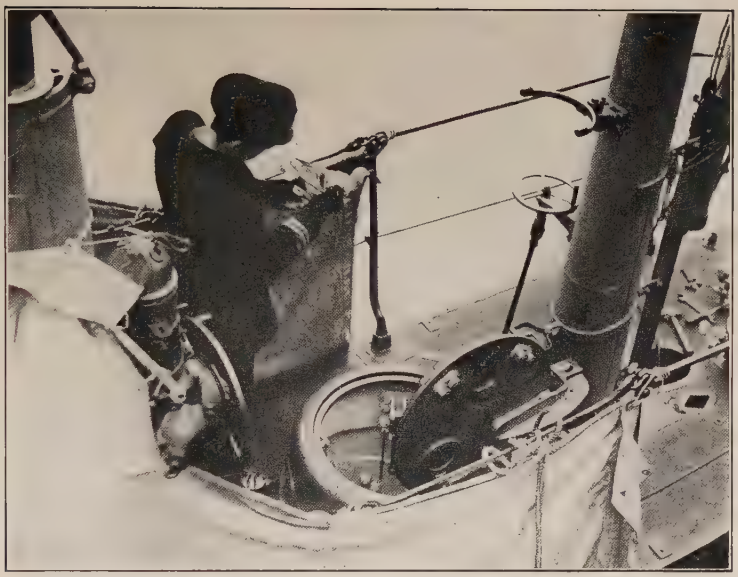
been down to fifty feet. I continued diving and searched the position for signs of the other submarine. I passed one large patch of oil, but could discover nothing further.

About ten minutes after the hydroplane first jammed, my submarine suddenly became buoyant forward and I was once more able to work the hydroplane. Either the hostile submarine which I had rammed had fouled herself and then got clear of me, or part of the hydroplane itself was carried away in the collision.

I consider that the other submarine was sunk because of the acute angle she took when last seen and her strenuous efforts to rise to the surface. She was seriously holed, in all probability, and on this account I made every effort to keep her down. An examination showed three big dents in the casing of my own vessel, one on the gun platform, and another on the conning-tower.

If you care to think it over, this is an episode truly hair-raising, — two submarines nosing about in the North Sea, coming together in this immense waste of water, and the one ramming the other and pressing her under, in spite of her struggles to rise, until the leaking hull was drowned. No great force is required to punch a hole in the skin of a submarine, and the crew of the British boat expected, no doubt, to be drowned as well when they heard "several blows along the port side" as the German craft pounded and scraped and was stamped under.

They stood at their posts, be it noted, with



AN OFFICER IN A BRITISH SUBMARINE ATTACHING A MESSAGE TO THE LEG OF A PIGEON

RAISING A BRITISH SUBMARINE ALONGSIDE A MOTHER SHIP FOR EXAMINATION

death imminent, perhaps thirty men with every one his own job to attend to while their submarine was executing her hasty manœuvres, diving, filling and blowing ballast tanks, struggling to crush the enemy beneath them, or making for the surface with a crippled bow rudder. There could have been no fright or faltering while all this was going on.

This brave submarine was singularly fortunate to survive the combat. In such a collision as this, both boats might have been expected to find a grave at the bottom of the North Sea. Another submarine of the fleet fared tragically in what may have been a similar encounter. There was one survivor of the crew or else her fate would have been unknown. It was not a mine that smashed her plates in, for there was no explosion. A sunken wreck or a German submarine — these are the plausible surmises.

There is nothing extraordinary, alas, in the loss of a British submarine while cruising against the enemy, and, no doubt, there will be American submarines on this same sad roll of honor. This disaster achieved distinction and becomes conspicuous because of the experience of the lone survivor, a stoker petty officer of the Royal Navy. Never were the qualities of the trained submarine man more magnificently displayed. Methodically he reported how the boat was lost and how he came to be the only man left alive in the shattered hull:

At 10.30 A.M. on Tuesday, something was heard to contact with the boat forward, twice in quick succession. The engine-room telegraph rang to "out clutches." I took out the port clutch and then closed the muffler valve when it was reported that the ship was making water. I proceeded forward to ascertain the position of the leak. Finding no leak above the battery board, I came to the conclusion that she was holed low down.

My first impulse was to close the lower conning-tower hatch and get air pressure in the boat, but the men were then going up the conning-tower in the hope of escape. At this time S——, an artificer, spoke to me and asked my opinion. I replied that we might have a chance if we could close the hatch and get some air pressure in the boat. He thereupon stood by the air valves and asked if all hands were out of the engine-room. I replied that I would find out.

On going aft, I found one man coming forward and I ordered him to put on a life-belt and keep his head until he could get a chance to climb up the conning-tower hatch. Finding nobody else, I went forward and put on a life-belt, then went back and closed the valve in the air trunk through the engine-room bulkhead, as at this time I thought I might have to use the engine-room as a way of escape.

I then returned to try to close the lower conning-tower hatch, but before I reached it the water began to come down through it and the engine-room bulkhead scupper, so I shouted to the men forward to come aft to the engine-room. There was no response. Repeated efforts brought no reply, the midship compartment being in darkness and partly flooded. Therefore it was impossible to discover if there was any one alive.

Beyond a low moaning there was no sound.

All hands were dead excepting this cool-headed, iron-nerved stoker petty officer, who had not the slightest intention of making the same finish. He was an engineer, in fact,— a man who knew every nut, bolt, and gadget of his submarine, and he had a mind infinitely fertile in resource. More than this, he was filled with an unquenchable will to live. His explanation of what he did is highly technical in spots and bristling with the most conscientious detail. It makes it hard to realize that he was toiling for his very life in a flooded submarine at the bottom of the North Sea, with a crew of dead men, and no more than one chance in a thousand of seeing daylight again. He sounds as if he were conducting a series of very careful mechanical experiments in a perfectly safe machine shop on dry land.

It was impossible for me to leave the door [he goes on to say], as it would have closed behind me and I could not have opened it again because of the increase of pressure in the flooding compartments. I remained there, still hoping that some of the men might come aft, until the water rose eighteen inches above the sill of the door and chlorine gas began to come through from the midship compartment.

I was then reluctantly forced to close the door and proceeded to unscrew the clips of the torpedo hatch above me as the only hope of escape through the deck. At this time the engine-room was in complete darkness with the exception of the port pilot lamp which appeared to be burning through a short circuit.

The water was slowly rising in the engine-room through the voice pipes which I had left open to relieve excessive pressure on the bulkheads. I then disconnected the torpedo hatch from the gearing which necessitated the removal of two split-pins and the two pins from the links. Before the foremost one could be removed, however, I had to unship the strong-back and wait until there was enough pressure in the boat to ease off the hatch.

The heat at this time was excessive, and therefore I rested awhile and considered the best means of flooding the engine-room, and eventually came to the conclusion that the best way was to flood through the stern tubes or the weed-trap of the circulating system, or by dropping the exhaust and induction valves and flooding through the muffler valve. I tried the stern tube first, but could open neither rear door nor stern cap.

I then came forward to the fore part of the engine-room and considered the problem once more. While passing the switchboards, however, I received shocks owing to the water from the voice pipes running over them and onto the floor. I then came to the conclusion that the next best thing would be to try the weed-trap, so I went aft, but could not get back the butterfly nuts as the weed-trap was in an awkward position and the water was pouring down on top of me.

This captive, penned like a rat in a trap, had tried one expedient after another, each one failing him in turn, — a refractory torpedo hatch, impossible caps and traps, nuts which refused to budge, — and yet he was undismayed and stubbornly resolute, splashing to and fro in the gloom,

seeking a place where he might pause to "consider the problem once more."

The water had risen above his knees in the engine-room and there was only the tiny glow of the one "pilot light" to guide his course. To find all these fittings and devices which he hoped to manipulate, he had to grope by means of the sense of touch. He had been severely shocked by the vagrant electric current and the chlorine gas was choking him. And yet he was clear-headed, unwearied, somehow suggesting Robinson Crusoe, who, in his own peculiar dilemmas, would thoughtfully halt to ponder and consider.

The only hope was this torpedo hatch which opened through the deck above his head. In order to make use of it, he must flood the engine-room, letting in more water so that the air pressure might be increased sufficiently to lift the hatch and blow him up into the open sea outside.

A last desperate experiment, and one absolutely novel in the annals of the few escapes from sunken submarines! This admirable stoker petty officer returned to the hatch, crawling on top of the engines that he might wrestle with the exhaust and induction pipes, but discovered that the pressure inside the boat was equalizing the external pressure and that the hatch was rising from the strong-backs before he was ready for it.

Again he went at the hatch in his unflurried, deliberate manner, using a spanner for a tool.

This he had thoughtfully picked up in the engine-room just before the water came swirling in to rise eighteen inches over the sills. Hammering away at the fastenings, he knocked out one pin, but was unable to remove the other.

He then dived under water and eased the wheel of the gearing, which sounds like a very ticklish bit of work in itself, and bobbed up again to find that he could now drive out the remaining pin. It was about time for him to "arrive at another conclusion," for he was prepared to flood the boat completely. The result of his orderly cogitation was as follows: —

I have always held the theory that the pressure in a sunken air-locked vessel can be greater than the external pressure, the deciding factors being the weight and shape of the sunken hull. I now discovered that the boat was flooding very slowly, and I decided as a last resort to open the scupper in the engine-room bulkhead. I anticipated chlorine gas generating from this water, which proved to be the case.

Also, as the water came in, the air was escaping through the hatch. So I tried three times to open the hatch and succeeded in raising it about halfway, but the air rushed out and the hatch fell down again. So then I dived down under water and retrieved the clip bolts and shipped two of them and lightly secured them to the end of the dogs, the idea being to get sufficient pressure in the boat, then knock the bolts away, hoping to be blown out by the pressure.

I then proceeded to put this idea in execution. The

hatch flew open, but there was not enough pressure to blow me out, nor yet time for me to escape before the heavy hatch came down again. I tried once more to lift the hatch with my shoulder, but it descended upon my hand. I managed to raise the hatch and free my hand which was quite badly crushed.

I now concluded that it was impossible to attempt to blow myself out by means of internal pressure. Therefore I knocked the dogs off the deadlights and allowed the boat to flood as quickly as possible with the idea of flooding the engine-room completely and then raising the hatch and escaping.

I allowed the engine-room to flood until the water was up to the coaming of the hatch. I then raised up the hatch and escaped, rising to the surface and being picked up by H.M.S. F——.

The narrative of the stoker petty officer seems to end abruptly, but there was nothing more for him to say. He floated out through the square hatch opening after letting the compartment flood to the ceiling. The comment of the officer commanding the submarine flotilla displays an enthusiasm unusual in an Admiralty report. It sums up one of the most wonderful feats in the whole story of submarine warfare: —

Although the man was fighting for his life, it is an extraordinary example of unfaltering courage and perseverance and of refusing to acknowledge defeat. He was alone, in almost complete darkness, receiving electric shocks and, towards the end, suffering from the effects of chlorine gas and a badly crushed hand, and yet, in spite of continual disappointments, he

worked on *for nearly two hours*, keeping his head to the last and at the seventh attempt at opening the hatch he succeeded and escaped.

A great deal has been heard about the explosive bomb or depth-charge in connection with the work of the American destroyers in the war-zone. This has proved to be the most effective method of attack against the U-boat, but it is seldom possible to learn what happens under water when these wicked missiles drop close to their target. A depth-charge, placed where it will do the most good, is likely to leave no survivors and no traces other than a spreading smear of oil. It is entertaining, therefore, to find on record the emotions of certain British submarines when the Hun took his turn at the game and let go a few hundred pounds of high explosive packed in neat metal canisters.

One of these matter-of-fact commanders of the North Sea patrol was cruising off the enemy's coast when he sighted a German steamer: —

We ran on the surface at full speed to intercept her [said he]. When a mile distant from her, the steamer hoisted the German naval ensign and opened fire on us with guns of about the size of six-inch. We then had our mast up with commercial signals flying, "Stop engines" and "Send a boat."

Our deck gun was promptly manned and there were altogether about ten men on our deck. The steamer then altered course toward us and increased her speed with obvious intention to ram.

A GERMAN SUBMARINE SUNK BY DEPTH-BOMBS LIFTED TO THE SURFACE BETWEEN PONTOONS

We dived. By this time the shells from the steamer had twice straddled our submarine and water came into the conning-tower, the spray from one of the enemy's shells. Our boat brought up at a depth of 120 feet, badly out of trim. Two or three minutes later, two loud explosions were heard overhead, evidently depth-charges. They shook the boat very violently, but no serious damage was done. We dived to the southeast.

This venturesome submarine got more than she bargained for and escaped being blown up by a very narrow margin. Another commander of the same British flotilla was more explicit and analytical. He took pains to describe precisely how it felt to be bombed. His boat had sought cover beneath the sea, but the enemy was annoyingly persistent and came within an ace of demolishing him. This young man portrays the situation with a kind of sedate detachment, but it does seem as though he must have been a trifle agitated at the time, and he confesses it to this extent: —

Personally on this occasion I felt most uneasy, as it seemed to me that we were being given away and located by some indications on the surface, for the depth-charges appeared to be dropped with great accuracy. This was my second experience in being depth-bombed, and in this instance it was certain that a good estimate had been made of our position.

There is no doubt that an experience of this nature is most trying because one can only wait and listen in silence and darkness without being able to strike

back. In my opinion there is no permanent moral effect in the majority of cases, although it may perhaps affect highly strung individuals of a submarine crew. It was noticed that for a day or two after this encounter, some of the men started on being awakened from sleep or on being touched suddenly and unexpectedly by other persons.

In my own case I felt at the time that I would much rather remain on the surface and engage the enemy at all costs than to endure the discomfort of another similar experience.

A happier episode is that of a submarine operating from this same British base which accounted for the enemy in a style so brisk and satisfactory that the performance may be set down as perfect. It would mar the artistic finish of the record to add a word more by way of trying to color it: —

An enemy submarine was sighted near —— Lightship. I proceeded at full speed and, overtaking the submarine, got into position on her bow and fired both my bow torpedoes at a range of four hundred yards. One torpedo scored a clean hit. When the smoke cleared away, the submarine had disappeared. There were no survivors.

A British commodore whose business it is to direct the operation of a large number of these submarines employed in hostile waters was desirous of emphasizing the fact that too much must not be expected of this service in actually destroying U-boats. He spoke with intimate knowledge and as the result of long observation: —

"The warfare of submarine *versus* submarine has proved to be capable of no more than a sporting chance of demolishing the enemy. Almost every day sightings and encounters occur, but from the nature of these vessels an attack is most difficult and hits are infrequent because of the uncertain problem of estimating the course of one submarine through the periscope of another.

"There is, however, a definite moral effect to be achieved apart from the number of hostile craft actually sunk. Although we have suffered losses of our own, the total results have been well worth while. Our experience justifies the American Navy Department in sending its submarines to assist and strengthen this patrol service.

"The duties of our flotillas are most arduous. During the long daylight of summer they are compelled to submerge for nineteen or twenty hours, after twelve hours of which the air becomes oppressive. They are always in the vicinity of known minefields and in areas most likely to contain newly laid mines or those which have drifted out of position.

"They are harassed continually by destroyers, trawlers, and special anti-submarine vessels fitted with sweeps and depth-charges, by enemy submarines and by aircraft. It is seldom possible to come to the surface in daylight. The rapidly changing density of the water on the enemy's coast makes the trimming and depth-control a constant anxiety.

"Positive results under such conditions cannot be plentiful, but these results are no measure of the work done or the risks incurred by submarines in the war. What is required and given by these men is two-o'clock-in-the-morning courage for every hour of the time they are at sea. Two American submarine officers were taken out for a week's patrol in one of our boats. This was before their own flotilla had come over and they had undergone no special training in the conditions of active warfare.

"At the end of the cruise they frankly confessed, to use their own words, 'they were all in and fit for nothing,' although they had encounters with the enemy to cheer them up, in one of which a German ship was sunk. Only by going aboard a submarine when she returns from one of these long patrols can one realize what a tremendous strain is imposed on the personnel."

It may be taken for granted, however, that the personnel is blithe and fit so long as there is action in sight, such as the sport of shooting at a large, fat Zeppelin and beholding it burst into flames, then picking up the survivors and taking these dripping, sad-eyed Germans into port as prisoners of war. Or it may be a fight that has the elements of the old-fashioned scrimmage on salt water — gun against gun, and rifles and cutlasses ready at hand if it comes to boarding or close quarters.

The submarine is a most versatile craft when

manned by those who know what can be done with her. For varied incident, here is a true tale of the North Sea patrol which must have been far more enjoyable than the commander dared set down in his official report: —

At 2.42 P.M. I sounded the diving alarm, having seen a submarine about three miles off on the starboard beam. I failed to get a sight of the enemy through the periscope because he dived simultaneously. I was able to locate him by listening and could tell when he crossed my bows and laid an easterly course, for he challenged repeatedly on a sound signalling apparatus which gave a high whistling note.

We dived east all the afternoon, trying to keep in touch with him. About 6 P.M., observing white smoke on the horizon, we stood towards it and by seven o'clock could see the masts and funnels of two steamers. An hour later, it being dark, we came to the surface and closed in on the steamers. There was still a little light in the western sky, but observation was difficult.

We were able, however, to see a submarine between the two steamers, but could not tell which way it was heading, or which was bow and stern. We stood by all the torpedo tubes and manned the deck gun. The left-hand steamer showed no lights.

I fired the port bow tube at the submarine, but missed. The enemy was under way by this time, so I increased to full speed and endeavored to ram him, he crossing my bows from port to starboard about fifty yards off, and still running on the surface. Just before this I began shelling him. Immediately there was a flash from in front of his bridge, either the explosion of our shell or his forward gun.

Our second round, I think, undoubtedly hit him in the hull below the conning-tower, he being beam on to us, and the roll giving our gunlayer the shine of his hull as a target.

The enemy replied with his after gun and we fired again. By this time we were right astern of him, about 150 yards away. The enemy then disappeared, the sea going clean over him as his last shot was fired. I dived straight at him, but as nothing happened and I was unable to hear him, I put the helm over and came up between the two steamers again. There were no signs of anybody about, so there was nothing more to be done, and, having no boat to board the steamers in the dark, I dived and reloaded tubes and then came up again, remaining in the vicinity until daylight.

It has happened that when a U-boat was intent on shelling and sinking a merchant steamer, a British submarine was able to creep, unobserved, within striking distance. This is righteous retribution — to catch the pirate in the act and give him a fatal dose of his own medicine. Such an opportunity is seldom vouchsafed the swift destroyer because she can be sighted a long way off and the U-boat is able to slip under like a shadow. The submarine, however, can stalk its prey, and there is always the hope of stealing close without detection. Such an instance as this, as concisely related by the commander, must have brought joy to his stout heart: —

Observing flashes on the starboard bow, we altered course and soon observed a merchant vessel. The

flashes proved to be gun-fire from a submarine. We dived. The steamer had Dutch colors painted on her side and was sinking by the stern. As we rose to show a periscope and take another look, I discovered a large submarine, partially submerged, with a gun manned forward of the conning-tower, which was apparently waiting for the steamer to sink. The submarine had ceased firing.

I tried to get him with a bow torpedo and succeeded. The noise of the explosion was heard, also a great disturbance of the water was experienced. I perceived through the periscope that the submarine had disappeared. I then dived to sixty feet, reloaded, rose, and proceeded.

The mine-laying submarine of the British service leads a vastly precarious life, for her errands lead her near to the enemy's coasts and harbors where she is harried and hunted and trapped without mercy. With the Germans busily sowing their mines off the English ports, it may be reasonably assumed that the Royal Navy is as earnestly engaged in this same occupation on the other side of the North Sea. Such an adventure is singularly free from the monotony of patrol duty, and the following experience may be taken as fairly typical: —

I let go the last mine. Observed three vessels making a lot of smoke, as if burning oil fuel, and two seaplanes on the starboard beam, all coming towards me. I fixed position and altered course, diving to avoid them. Could plainly hear vessels on starboard side, so stopped all small motors and proceeded slow.

Changed course in every direction to try to escape vessels that were following me, but with no success. Heard explosions of depth-charges very close to the boat. Stopped everything and remained on bottom. Could hear many vessels in close proximity to boat.

As many as twenty depth-charges were dropped around us, but none was near enough to cause damage. Sweeps could be heard, and on three occasions something bumped and scraped along the side, probably sweep-wires.

Two bombs were also dropped by a seaplane directly overhead.

CHAPTER VIII

OVER AND UNDER THE NORTH SEA

IT was presumed to be a short practice cruise in a British submarine which had docked for a refit. Another boat of the flotilla was detailed to go to sea at the same time and play around with her while a destroyer churned out ahead of them to make the game more interesting. It was a harbor crowded with many kinds of fighting craft, all of them alert, prepared, held under the briefest possible steaming notice. The commander of the light cruiser squadron could see the roof of his own home ashore, but he had not slept there for a single night during three years. Whenever the signal came, which was at least once in the week, his fast ships dashed straight for the German coast on the chance of intercepting the enemy, and he had a wonderful knack of finding trouble when he sought it.

This harbor in which he continually watched and waited had no quiet moments. Submarines moved stolidly out through the gate in the barrier of nets or wearily returned from patrol somewhere across the North Sea. Destroyers were forever busy on errands of their own, hastening at top speed, singly or in divisions. Armed motor launches frisked to and fro, trying to impress you

with the idea that they were the chaps to chase submarines if the weather was n't so confoundedly rough outside. Seaplanes swept high overhead and steered afar on their own patrol courses to release their cargoes of bombs whenever they caught a glimpse of a conning-tower or a telltale patch of white water. Paddle mine-sweepers, once familiar to the noisy excursionists bound for a holiday to Margate or the Isle of Man, were given over to the clattering winches, the drums of steel cable, and the resourceful crews of the R.N.V.R.

The two submarines passed clear of the harbor entrance and were in the wide war channel which was diligently swept clear of mines. This was fairly safe water, and the merchant steamers were filing up and down the coast, vague shapes against a misty sky-line. The waiting destroyer lifted her low hull two miles to the westward and her radio sent a signal to follow her farther out, where the sea was clear of other traffic.

"It's rather a nuisance," said the captain of the submarine in which I had taken passage. "Gun practice is the first number on the bill. There's a nasty bit of a chop and our merry gunners will be washed all about the deck."

They were already clustered on the narrow platform over which the spray showered even at reduced speed. Ammunition was handed up from below, telescope sights clamped in position, lenses wiped, and all the other gadgets carefully tested.

DECK VIEW OF A BRITISH SUBMARINE

It makes the operation of a gun no easier to have it submerged fathoms deep every little while.

One began to comprehend why the marksmanship of the German submarine gunners has been so notoriously poor, why they have fired literally hundreds of shells at high-sided cargo steamers before inflicting fatal damage. It is remarkable, in fact, that they have been able to sink so many of them by shell-fire and at long ranges. As an unstable and precarious gun platform, the submarine is in a class by itself. A gunner who must risk rolling overboard as well as drowning where he stands is likely to be diverted from the task in hand.

A target was dropped from the destroyer and towed astern, a black blob of an object that foamed in the wake at a speed of ten knots. The serene faith of the destroyer that she would not be potted by a wild shot was truly admirable.

"Oh, the skipper won't worry over a little thing like that," cheerily observed the submarine commander. "We never *have* hit him, don't you know. And war is such a sporting proposition. You really can't play it safe. Besides, he's a friend of mine. We have a round of golf on when we get ashore to-morrow."

The gun crew grinned as the wind blew the words their way. The water seemed cold enough to freeze as it fell and the January wind had a cutting edge. Two of these hardy British bluejackets had not troubled themselves to jump into

oilskins. Already their blue blouses were dripping wet and plastered to their ribs. Wiping the brine from their eyes, they trained the gun and it barked with the ear-splitting crack which is so much more trying than the thunder of the big ones in the battleship turrets.

The splash was in line with the target, but fell short. A sea slapped the gunners as they reloaded and fired again. The submarine rolled lazily, like a fat man turning over in bed, and the shell flew over the target. After this the splashes were closer, and a merchant mariner, similarly bombarded, would have been in a mood to take to the boats. The destroyer was kind enough to signal that the score was n't so rotten and thereupon she departed for home in discourteous haste.

This mildly displeased the submarine commander who explained: "He was sent out to tow a target for us, but he might have waited to let me shoot a torpedo at him, — thought the other submarine would keep us amused, I fancy."

This other submarine had been diving at a distance of perhaps a mile, in readiness for torpedo practice with her companion. Both boats presently submerged. Our skipper turned the periscope handles this way and that to rake the sea. A few minutes later he stiffened as though a live wire had touched him, and softly exclaimed: —

"By Jove! I can't be wrong. What a jolly mix-up!"

Two or three terse commands, spoken in a conversational tone of voice, and the crew was prepared to do his bidding. In the forward torpedo-room the men bent over the gearing of the tubes, but they were *not* interested in the torpedo with the dummy practice head. The missile with the war nose was ready to speed from the tube at the touch of a trigger.

The skipper, still absorbed in what he saw in the periscope's magical reflection, was talking to himself and seemed a trifle short of breath.

"Impossible for that other boat of ours to have run that distance submerged. Ah, there she is, — about where she ought to be, off to port. This strange periscope, — fifteen hundred yards to starboard, — a Hun, or I'll eat my hat."

Our boat was swinging as one could perceive by glancing at the great bowl of the gyroscope compass. Here was the probability of deadly combat, unexpected, almost incredible, and nothing whatever to be seen of it. Three submarines in a small area of the sea, all of them submerged! It was impossible to tell whether the other British boat, E 76, had sighted the enemy and was about to attack.

"We're on a line between the two of 'em," lamented the skipper, "and poor old E 76 can't let go a torpedo without scuppering *us*."

Our boat was in position and, an instant later, the hull tilted sharply and then swam at the proper

poise as the torpedo leaped from a bow tube. With all the speed at which the electric motors could drive her, she forged ahead in the desperate attempt to ram. There was no time to waste in rising awash and shifting to the oil engines. The hostile periscope, if such it was, vanished from the surface and our own submarine passed over the spot where it had been, but felt no jar.

"Missed! And I thought I had him!" cried the skipper. "He'll hug the bottom and I have n't got a depth-charge to stir him up with."

Our boat broke water and the conning-tower hatch was thrust up before the decks had risen clear. The wireless mast was hoisted and signals went crackling to the base port to rush destroyers to sea and search out the enemy. E 76 poked up a streaming bridge upon which a tall figure in a duffle coat brandished a megaphone and demanded to know what the shindy was about.

"I sighted the periscope," scoffed this skeptic, "but God gave me almost human intelligence. One of our own boats, of course, back from patrol a day or two ahead of time, and you were n't looking for her, you silly ass."

"Thanks awfully," replied our skipper, "but I'll bet you a dozen golf balls on that."

Soon the smoke of the destroyers was visible as they picked their way out of the harbor and jammed ahead at thirty knots. As they drew near they scattered like trained hounds to range for the scent.

No friendly submarine was expected inbound from patrol, they reported. The strange periscope might have been that of a German mine-layer which had been detained by some mishap instead of steering homeward during the night. Be that as it might, the mysterious visitor had left no traces when she took cover to escape being rammed.

The dusk of this cloudy winter day on the North Sea coast began to fall in the middle of the afternoon. Shortly before the light faded, a destroyer sighted and picked up a torpedo which had made its run. Now, among the navies of civilized powers, a war torpedo which misses its mark will go to the bottom. It has a sinking gear devised for this purpose, in order that it may not destroy any innocent vessel that comes in contact with it. The German torpedo, when used in enemy waters, is apt to float. There is the pleasing chance that it may accidentally *strafe* a transport or a hospital ship.

"It *was* a Hun!" exclaimed the submarine commander, "and the lousy murderer got clean away from us. I win a dozen golf balls and I'll stick dear old E 76 for the dinner besides. A bunch of trawlers is coming out to sweep for our German friend, but he may fool them during the night."

"Carry on," said the executive. "No sad faces. We can't have all the luck. Did n't we blow a fine, big one to hell only three weeks ago? And we are due on the long patrol again."

The German friend did fool them, alas, for neither

depth-charges nor sweep-wires succeeded in fetching him up. His fortune was better than he deserved, and he returned to Heligoland, no doubt, to take on another cargo of mines to be strewn off English harbors. He was an episode of war — not in the least sensational to those engaged in hunting him.

What the German submarine commander wrote down in his diary of the trip is an interesting conjecture. A few of these notebooks, stained by the sea, have been recovered from U-boats sunk or captured by the Allies. For the most part the entries are bald and brief, but even these reflect, in an intimate manner, something of the existence and the emotions of the men who have forfeited their manhood in an outlawed career of aggression against the innocent and the helpless. One of these diaries, I remember, contained such pencilled items as these:

Left Bruges. . . . Passed within 650 yards of three large destroyers. . . . Moon just setting behind the clouds. . . . Slept. . . . When I was about to go on watch there was an alarm. . . . Quick dive. . . . Two seaplanes about 600 feet above the boat. . . . Dived. . . . Four bombs dropped from seaplanes but they went wide. . . .

Came to the surface. . . . Two airships sighted. . . . Dived. . . . Came to the surface. . . . Another seaplane. . . . Dived. . . . Two bombs almost hit us. . . . Passed U-boat —— and later U-boat ——. Weather clear and sunny. . . . Nothing special. . . .

Steered for Havre and laid nine mines just outside the buoys. . . . I slept during this, but it was a pain-

ful process. . . . We nearly got caught in a net. . . . On watch. . . . Steered for Caën Roads to lay mines. While doing so ran ashore about 5 A.M., but got off again with the oil engines. . . . Two fishing vessels evaded us. . . . Dived, as convoy was sighted. . . .

Sank a 3000-ton Norwegian steamer by torpedo from No. 2 tube. . . . Slept. . . . Dived, as there were destroyers in vicinity. . . . An explosion was heard. . . . On watch upon the conning-tower in the sunshine. . . . Dived to avoid an English destroyer. . . .

Came to surface and headed for Cherbourg in order to lay mines there. . . . Laid five mines off Cherbourg. . . . It is to be hoped they will be of use. . . . Then steered north. . . . Four armed vessels sighted. . . . A peaceful watch, but one cannot do without an oilskin now. . . . Dived to escape large English destroyer. . . . Dived again for same reason. . . . Steering an erratic course. . . .

Dived to avoid two patrol boats. . . . On watch. . . . Dived to carry out attack on two steamers off ——. Of course we were unsuccessful. . . . Stopped charging battery and headed for a steamer, but the bright moonlight made it impossible to get near her. . . . Slept. . . . Dived to avoid destroyer. . . . Dived to attack two steamers each convoyed by destroyers, but of course we never got a shot in. . . . Torpedo was ready in tube. . . .

Came to surface. . . . Destroyer sighted ahead and two-masted schooner to port. Steamer also sighted to port. Proceeded to attack on surface. The steamer, however, saw us in the moonlight, made Morse signal, and turned away. . . . Another steamer sighted to starboard. She also saw us and changed her course, soon disappearing. All this happened 15 miles south of St. Catharine's Point in bright moonlight. . . .

After this, however, we turned about and headed for Havre. . . . Dived to avoid large destroyer coming up on our starboard bow. . . . Proceeded at depth of 60 feet. . . . Slept. . . . Dived to avoid three drifters. . . . Lay on the bottom at depth of 131 feet. . . . I did not sleep as my opposite number was also off watch. . . . Came to surface. . . . Dived to avoid being seen by a sailing ship. . . .

Fired stern torpedo at a Norwegian steamer in ballast. . . . The torpedo passed to one side or under the vessel. . . . Fired bow torpedo at an oil-tanker, but torpedo went very wide. . . . Lay on bottom till midnight. . . . Reloaded stern tube with spare torpedo. . . .

It seems plausible to infer from this fragmentary diary that not all U-boats are trained to the top-notch of German efficiency. This officer was obviously rather hopeless of making a decent bag of merchant vessels and expected his torpedoes to miss. Another deduction is that the U-boat leads a hunted, worried life which cannot be soothing to the nerves of the crew. This particular craft was always diving to avoid something or other, and when she dived she was in danger of being "nearly caught in a net."

There are other perils besides these mentioned, such as the English sense of humor which has occasionally manifested itself even in submarine warfare.

Take, for instance, the episode of the lightship anchored somewhere in the North Sea. The Ger-

mans refrained from sinking it because their submarines found it very useful as a mark by which they set the course to turn and make the passage around the north of Scotland into the Atlantic. The British left the lightship undisturbed because it kept their destroyers and other patrol craft clear of a formidable stretch of shoals and sand banks. By tacit agreement, this helpful lightship went unmolested for many months.

What happened after that was described to me by the captain of a British gunboat once acquainted with shallow Chinese rivers and now bucketing about the North Sea.

"The mind of the Hun is frightfully methodical, do you see, and we took advantage of his psychology. That lightship had become a habit with him. His submarines fluttered around it like moths chasing a candle. We just dodged out when he was n't there and shifted the lightship a bit, — half a mile or so to the south'ard, — and tidily anchored it on the tail of a shoal.

"A simple sort of trick, but it worked. One of our patrols went out two days later and found two Hun submarines stranded hard and fast on the shoal. The deep water was n't where they had expected to fetch it. What's your Yankee lingo for a stunt like that? Oh, yes, we 'out-guessed' old Fritz."

This North Sea warfare is continually waged in three dimensions, on the sea, under, and over it.

A situation extraordinary, fantastic beyond words, but mankind has ceased to be astonished at anything. I was one day diving in a submarine and the next day soaring five thousand feet above this same stretch of water in a fighting seaplane whose hull was patched and scarred from the bullets of German machine guns. It is in such circumstances that one realizes what it means to have the war next door, a few steps from the front gate, as you might say. It has greatly handicapped the United States that the conflict is so remote in miles, so difficult to visualize.

The east coast of England finds nothing to complain of, in this respect. I was spending a winter afternoon at one of the hidden stations from which the little planes dart up like angry wasps to tackle the German air squadrons that come over to drop their bombs on women and kiddies in quiet country towns. In a long, fearless swoop there descended to the landing-field a racy, two-seated machine out of which climbed a pair of light-hearted youths, mere downy infants of about the sophomoric vintage if you had happened to find them on a college campus. They were chilled to the bone by the bitter air of high altitudes, but soon thawed and made merry over a pot of tea.

Their home station was thirty miles farther up the coast, it seemed, but they had gone a bit astray because of misty weather and needed more petrol to finish the journey.

"We'll have to shove along," said one of these marvellous youngsters. "The scheme is to change our clothes and get a train to London for dinner at the Berkeley —"

"And the show at the Criterion," the other cherub broke in. "We were as good as promised the night's leave and I think we're sure of it now."

"As a reward of merit. You see, we flew over to the Hun coast this morning and had a lucky trip of it. Two of their planes were up and we got both. One crashed, and the other was winged, — fell into the water and flopped about. Good-bye. Sorry to leave, but we're keen on that dinner party."

The machine sped across the field, rose, and was presently a speck vanishing at a gait of a hundred and twenty miles to the hour. A day's work — across the North Sea and back, two of the enemy accounted for in a deadly air battle, and time enough left for an innocent spree in London.

The large seaplane of the flying-boat type which the navy uses for submarine patrol work is not so agile or aggressive in attack as these venomous birds of passage that flit from their perches ashore. The flying boat is precisely what the name conveys, a yacht-like hull with a tremendous spread of wing and power to lift and drive tons of weight. She is seaworthy enough to alight, unless the weather is heavy, and to "taxi" home on the surface. The seaplane which depends on pontoons to keep her afloat is not at all like this aerial boat with her crew of four

or five men, her heavy freightage of bombs, and her formidable battery of machine guns. She is, in fact, a cruiser of the skies.

To keep the German submarine under, to drive it from the routes of traffic, to bomb it without mercy, and to escort the merchant convoys, — such are the duties which these flying boats perform with signal success, nor do they hesitate to engage the enemy in the air. They are one factor of the patrol which is shared with the destroyers and with their own submarines.

Several American aviators were training at the great naval air station where I found these impressive aircraft assembled in squadrons. One of these young men was Ensign Albert Dillon Sturtevant, captain of the Yale University crew in 1916. Over the storied four-mile course of the Thames at New London he had tested his courage to the utmost and endured the breaking strain. It was his splendid destiny to die in action, fighting to the last, his grave the North Sea. I had seen him often during the winter while he was finishing the training of a British naval war pilot. Once we met at dinner in the admiral's cabin of a famous old flagship. Sturtevant and his American comrades were conscious of their lowly rank and a little awed by their surroundings.

They looked very fit and trim in uniform and one felt proud that the winged emblem on their tunics was that of the American service. It was "Al"

A BRITISH ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN AND CREW

RELEASING A CARRIER PIGEON FROM A BRITISH SEA-PLANE

Sturtevant who called me aside to whisper in his engaging, boyish manner: —

"When you go back to Washington, — if you happen to meet any of my Yale friends, — do you mind telling them that you met me dining with a British admiral?"

A privilege far greater than this came to Sturtevant a few weeks later. He died for his country, and was mourned also by his friends of an allied nation who had dared and toiled with him and who had learned to love him. It was his first war flight. His own and one other large seaplane were assigned to escort a convoy of merchant ships across to the coast of Holland. The force was considered sufficient, but the enemy happened to be out in unusual force.

Ten German planes attacked the two British aircraft, one of which escaped and flew home. Sturtevant and his observer, in the other boat, were last seen fighting their machine guns against hopeless odds, their machine hit, crippled, and falling. This was the finish of a whole year's training and preparation, at home, in France, in England, — to be shot down with never a chance in his first contact with the enemy. So blind and illogical and pitiless is war, and yet the life of this Yale athlete and gallant gentleman was not thrown away. He dared and paid the price, flashing out of life like a meteor, in all the glory of audacious youth.

Such tragic episodes as this must be expected on

the North Sea air patrol. There are other pilots who have found the fortune of war less cruel than did "Al" Sturtevant, but, like the men of the submarine flotillas, there is always the chance that they may be set down as missing. I made one flight with a veteran warrior of twenty-one who wore the ribbon of the D.S.O. for shooting down nine German seaplanes in various encounters at sea. He had also displayed great skill and energy in bombing submarines, which was the important part of his job.

When ready for active service this boat of his lifted ten tons of total weight as she skittered from the water and took wing to boom along at ninety-odd knots an hour. Her hull bristled with machine guns, and one could move about in her as readily as in the cabin of a motor launch. A score of mechanics pushed the boat out of her shed and down the long inclined runway that led into the water. She rode upon wheeled trucks from which she floated off to ride with graceful buoyancy while the propellers whirled to the thrust of the roaring motors and seven hundred horse power.

Gathering headway, she rushed across the harbor and left a foaming wake until at a slight turn of the steering-wheel the rudder planes were deflected and the heavy craft picked herself up cleanly from the water and was in the air. Her motion was as steady as that of a tramp freighter snoring through a tropic calm at ten knots. The wind-shield broke the gale

that rushed past the bow, and it was only by glancing at the indicator that one could realize the speed of this flying boat, — seventy — eighty — ninety knots — almost a hundred land miles, — and the North Sea unrolling far beneath like a dull green carpet flecked with white.

Lighthouses gleamed as tiny as white sticks of candy at the edge of a doll's village, and fortifications outlined themselves in delicate tracery, lines, and squares, and angles. For miles and miles the coast was defined by the ribbon of surf, and the rivers wandered inland like silver threads.

The North Sea, almost untenanted when seen from the shore, was revealed as populous with many kinds of traffic. Unmolested, the cargo boats, grimy, deep-laden, were passing to and fro on their lawful occasions while the German High Sea Fleet lay at anchor behind its defenses and was impotent to trouble them. Divisions of destroyers were bound out on their own perilous patrols, and the trawlers moved in pairs to sweep the charted lanes. A submarine jogged on the surface, a ragged wisp of an ensign fluttering from her wireless mast.

The pilot shouted above the noise of the motors: "They are shy of submerging when they see us about. It's safer to stay on top and fly the old rag."

From the air it was possible to perceive how sincere must be the dislike of the German submarine for the foe which harries him like a hawk. The

range of the observer's vision is wonderfully enlarged. A periscope or the blurred shadow of a hull beneath the surface can be detected where the destroyer would pass and see nothing. The submarine which rises is in no trim to dive again on the instant. Almost a minute must elapse before safety can be sought in submersion. During this interval the seaplane can approach from a considerable distance and release a bomb or two which will explode with terrific effect.

"They have to stay down in daylight," explained the pilot. "We have 'em under control to that extent. And they can't see to do much mischief in the dark. There was one circus, — really amusing; a submarine of ours flushed a Hun and chased him to the surface. A couple of trawlers were handy and they blazed away with everything they had. I happened along in this same old bus, and unhooked all the bombs I had left. My word! but the Hun was rapidly going insane. He bolted straight into a mine-field, but this did n't stop the trawlers, of course.

"So there he was, — our submarine dusting him with torpedoes when he hunted the bottom, the trawlers shelling him when he showed on top, and a seaplane just to make it more interestin'. He lost what wits he had, became violent and frothed at the mouth, — and chased himself about in circles. The odd part of it was that none of us managed to hit him for ten minutes or so. We were all afraid of

blowing each other out of water. I all but bombed a trawler, and the skipper stopped to shake his fist and hurl curses at me. I knew what he said by his gestures.

"Then the other trawler missed ramming our submarine by a hair and there was more language. While these beggars were jawing each other, the demented Hun touched a mine and exploded in a thousand pieces. And that was the end of the show. It was too close for comfort, and the trawler men swore it shook all their teeth loose."

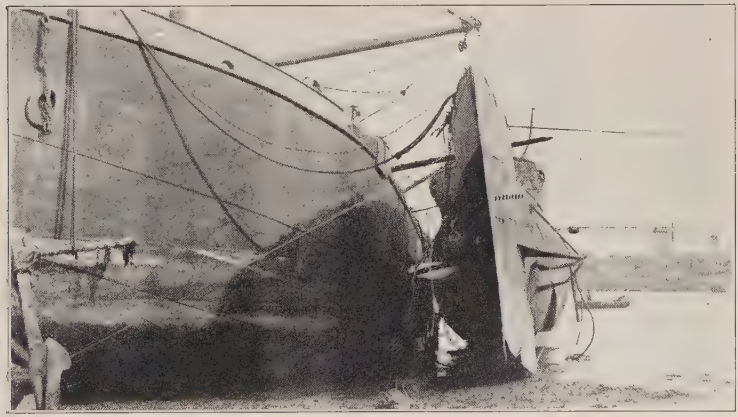
CHAPTER IX

TRAWLERS HOME FROM SEAWARD

"ANOTHER and more serious problem was in store for us," said my host, the Admiral who commanded one of these naval bases on the coast of the North Sea. He was discussing the strategy and tactics of the war afloat, as Great Britain had been compelled to grapple with it. "This form of activity was mine-laying as carried on by enemy submarines. At first it was confined to this east coast. Counter-measures had to be adopted. We greatly increased the fleets of our mine-sweeping vessels, and men were trained for them by thousands and thousands.

"By degrees the splendid personnel got the upper hand of the mine menace, although during the initial phases of this insidious warfare our resources were severely tried. The threat became more widespread, however, and it soon became apparent that Germany was building considerable numbers of this particular class of submarine. Their activities gradually extended through the Channel to its western ports, to the Irish Channel, and to the southern coast of Ireland. This extension was methodically and surely met by British mine-sweepers, ever increasing in numbers and efficiency."

The Damaged Hull



Bow-on View

Lifting out the Cargo of Mines

A MINE-LAYING GERMAN SUBMARINE CAPTURED BY A BRITISH DESTROYER

TRAWLERS HOME FROM SEAWARD

In the early months of the war the task of sweeping the channels and harbor entrances clear of hostile mines was comparatively simple. They were laid from disguised merchant vessels, some of them flying neutral flags, and they were pretty certain to be caught if they persisted in it. Then the ingenious Hun discovered that he could equip his submarines to creep under water and sow mines like some infernal sea monster depositing its eggs. It was immensely difficult to find and destroy these stealthy submarines, although occasionally one of them would carelessly sit down upon one of its own mines and instantaneously become a total loss.

Here was a vital phase of the war about which the public knew almost nothing. It was assumed that the German submarine menace was aimed against merchant vessels at sea by means of the torpedo or the shell-fire attack — that the problem was one to be solved on the surface of the ocean. More incessant and determined, however, more deadly in his power to throttle commerce, was the mine-laying submarine which ranged every thoroughfare of the British Isles.

It was a sinister, invisible blockade which attempted to destroy every ship bound in or out, coastwise or offshore. Unchecked, it would have beleaguered Great Britain long ago and made starvation inevitable.

These mines were planted, not only by thousands, but by tens of thousands, and the grim, silent con-

flict still goes on, the trawlers steadfastly sweeping them up, the German submarines creeping over from Zeebrugge, Heligoland, or Wilhelmshafen to drop another cargo in the hope of wiping out merchant vessels with all on board. It has become a losing game for the enemy because the hated Briton mastered all the tricks of the trade. He so ordered it that his shipping could come and go, protected by a system well organized, and the skippers knew that their roads had been made safe before they ventured forth.

The enormous volume of traffic between the busy ports on all the coasts flows almost without interruption, passing by the forlorn masts and hulks of other ships, which had come to grief earlier in the war when German invention displayed the same devilish and surprising aptitude for this sort of work that was revealed in the use of gas and liquid fire on land.

It is a mistake to suppose that these mines were sown adrift or in any haphazard fashion. This is not the habit of the Teutonic mind. Most of the floating mines which nervous shipmasters have sighted at sea had broken away from their moorings and were not deliberately left to wander on the chance that something might bump into them. This would not be sufficiently precise and scientific. They are dropped and anchored by chart and scale, and the submarine commander is told where to leave his unholy freight.

The German mine, as perfected during the war, is a wonderfully efficient contrivance for its purpose, a huge steel egg containing an air chamber for buoyancy, and several hundred pounds of high explosive in the base. Around the top, at the large end of the egg, are horns five or six in number, small cylinders of lead several inches in length, which are easily bent or broken at a touch from a passing vessel.

Each horn has within it a glass vial filled with an acid which runs down into the mine as soon as the vial is shattered, and combines with certain chemicals to make an electric cell. A current instantly passes through the wires leading to the detonator and sets the machine off with a prodigious bang and a spouting geyser of water. More deadly than a torpedo, such a mine is almost certain to rip the bottom out of the stoutest ship afloat. Smaller craft, such as trawlers, drifters, smacks, and coastwise colliers, are usually blown to fragments.

The submarine lays them through openings in her bottom, four or five wells, in each of which are two or three mines very neatly packed one above the other. The mine itself sets in a cage or cradle with a heavy, concrete anchor base, something like an egg in a cup, and the whole contrivance leaves the submarine in this compact form.

Thereafter the mine proceeds to act on its own initiative, with almost human intelligence. In the mooring-base is a coiled wire cable which releases itself by means of a hydrostatic valve with a de-

layed action that permits the submarine to move clear of entanglement or collision. In a leisurely manner, the egg or mine leaves its cradle base and floats upward, rising until it reaches a point eight or ten feet below the surface at the slack of the tide.

There it sways and bobs in ambush, its fragile horns holding sudden death and obliteration, with no possible way of discerning its presence from the deck of a ship. These are costly eggs, with all their delicate mechanism, and the Imperial German Government is something like fifteen hundred dollars out of pocket for every mine laid off England's coasts. In the approaches to one North Sea port alone, more than a thousand mines were swept up during a recent year. And still the German submarines persisted in dropping more of them, nor did their enthusiasm appear to be waning.

Possibly the theory is to keep the British Navy busy, or part of it, and so divert the ships and men from other duties more annoying to the enemy. When the tide and weather favor, the mine-layers crawl in and unload, and promptly the sweepers clean them up and the signal goes to the long processions of laden merchant ships that they can securely proceed on their courses.

Now, the Navy could not spare the men needed for this kind of work nor were naval vessels suitable for it. In the ancient, wind-swept fishing ports of Lowestoft, Grimsby, Hull, and Yarmouth

MINE TAKEN FROM A CAPTURED SUBMARINE, NOW A SOUVENIR AT SHOTLY BARRACKS
ALSO AN UNEXPLODED BOMB DROPPED FROM A ZEPPELIN
EARLY IN THE WAR

were thousands of courageous seamen who knew the North Sea as a landsman knows his own door-yard. They raked the Dogger Bank with their trawls and earned their bread in rough waters, stanch Britons to the soles of their sea-boots and heartily hating the Hun and all his works.

There was nothing new to history in this fighting a foe in the North Sea. The forefathers of these fishermen of Yorkshire and the Norfolk coast had battled with the Danes, the French, and the Dutch through a thousand years. Every headland has its stirring traditions, every harbor its tales of foray and defense, and the ruins of Scarborough Castle overlook the scene of a Norse king's descent upon the fishing fleet in the dim twelfth century.

Stern experience has developed a powerful, seaworthy type of vessel for this North Sea fishing, just as it has bred a wonderful race of men. It is a region in which only stout hulls and stouter hearts can hope to endure and survive. The muddy, shallow waters are lashed into sudden fury by gales which sweep down with little warning, creating a wildly disordered sea.

Fog and mist cloud the fishing banks and darkness obscures the winter months, with sunrise after eight o'clock and dusk beginning at three. One must have known North Sea weather to realize what Admiral Jellicoe meant in referring to the "low visibility" which hampered the British tactics and gunnery during the battle of Jutland.

It is weather which favors the swift raids and hurried retreats of German destroyers and light cruisers whose bases are so close at hand. They have harried the helpless sailing smacks and hurled shells into unfortified coast towns, or snapped up merchant convoys bound to Norway by dashing out in overwhelming force. The keenest look-outs on the bridge or in the crow's-nest of a British patrol squadron can see no more than a tiny area of this gray and melancholy sea, and it has been found impossible always to prevent the German raider from wreaking mischief and scampering home again.

It was such provocations as these that aroused the North Sea fishermen to volunteer for the work of patrolling and mine-sweeping, just as the dropping of bombs on London drove thousands of recruits into the British Army. The skippers and crews of the trawlers and drifters were their own free men, stiff-necked and independent, eyeing the small pay and rigorous discipline of the Navy job with some disfavor. Many of these vessels were filled with kinfolk or neighbors who had sailed since boyhood in the Rose of Old England or the Charming Lass of Whitby.

While they deliberated, not so much hanging back as making up their minds, the German submarines were cruising out to the fishing banks to take their cowardly toll of the little unarmed boats. Not unarmed for long, however, because

the smacksmen clamored for guns and hoisted their red sails to beat out and tackle the pest of a submarine and so even up the score. They saw old friends and shipmates fetched in dead or wounded from other vessels of the fleet, and the list of missing swelled.

The old-fashioned romance of salt water has not vanished when a ketch-rigged sailing smack, with a crew of five men and a boy, — a craft smaller than the ancient schooners which ply along the Maine coast with lumber and granite, — actually fights and sinks a submarine. These doughty smacks did the trick, and more than once. They did it with gun-fire, with one gun at that, and the Hun learned to be wary of the fleet that fished and fought by turns.

At first the submarines which undertook this business carried no guns of their own, but trusted to a torpedo or a haughty summons to take to the boats while bombs were placed in the hold to blow the smack up. This was a blundering procedure, and also painful for the U-boat that filled and sank with the shells ripping through her skin.

Skipper Thomas Crisp won the Victoria Cross in the smack Nelson, and he gained the supreme award for valor while dying on his own blood-stained deck. It is a fine story to read about, but it was far more gratifying to hear it, as I did, from his daughter's husband who was with him in the engagement as a member of the Nelson's crew. We

met aboard a vessel of the North Sea trawler patrol and the youngster wore the uniform of the Naval Reserve.

He was sandy-haired, blue-eyed, awkward of manner, with a homely sense of humor which lent an artless touch to the narrative and kept it clear of heroics.

"We were driftin' about a bank where there was plenty of fish," said he, "a bit to the west-'ard of this eight-fathom knoll, which you can see on the chart where it is for yourself, sir. The rest of the smacks was some distance away with their nets out, and all so peaceful and merry-o.

"One of the hands was airin' his mind about submarines and wot he'd do to the perishin' rotter if he caught 'im, when, pop, up comes the Hun no more than a hundred yards from us. It was n't no shy and artful peep through a periscope that he gave us, but he boils up awash and is quite ready to finish us off all speedy and scornful-like, smacks bein' regarded as of no consequence, in a manner of speakin'.

"My father-in-law, 'im that was Skipper Thomas Crisp, had a different opinion about the matter, bein' a stubborn man and ownin' the smack, which was a very good vessel, indeed. And the crew more or less belonged to 'im as you might say, his own son bein' aboard, besides me that was 'is son-in-law.

"This bloomin' Hun had a gun on deck, so what

SKIPPER THOMAS CRISP, V.C., R.N.R.
Of the smack Nelson, wearing the D.S.C.

THOMAS CRISP, JR., R.N.R.
Who took command of the Nelson on his father's death

was the use of wastin' a valuable torpedo on us poor beggars? A few shots and we'd be handsomely done in, do you see, or takin' to the boat all in a jolly scramble. So away he blazes, but we gets the cover off our own pop-gun to be all sociable and obligin', and returns the compliment.

"Our skipper draws 'is share o' hard luck, for a shell comes aboard where he is standing by the tiller and takes off both 'is legs. He was fair cut in two, poor man, and there was nothing much left of Skipper Thomas Crisp below the waist. It was very amazin' to us that he was not dead at once, but there he was, sir, lyin' on deck and conscious, tho' sufferin' mortal pain. He begged of 'is own son and me to throw 'im over the side and end the grievous agony, but we had not the heart to do it for 'im and was disobedient to our skipper for the first time.

"He was not forgettin' the smack, mind you, and told the men very emphatic to work the gun and blow the blighted submarine to blazes. Also it was on 'is mind to send word to the admiral that the smack was attacked by a Hun and was in a bad way, with her skipper killed. It was 'imself that told us to get the message off by a pigeon, and what to say, before he died.

"This is how Skipper Thomas Crisp got his V.C., sir, and it was a great pity he could not live to journey down to London and see the King, which would have made 'im very proud, indeed.

It was most encouragin' to the rest of us to have the skipper buck us up instead of 'im dyin' promptly, which would have been quite proper under the circumstances, don't you think, sir?

"We kept on slappin' shells into the submarine and our gun-layer did a tidy bit o' work, for he put one into her and the Hun had quite enough of us, as his actions signified. He went down with 'is tail in the air as if he was sore hit and unhappy. At any rate, sir, he was quite disgusted with the smack Nelson and failed to sink her as was 'is intention."

While the sailing smacks were boldly venturing out into the North Sea to ply their fishing trade in time of war, the steam trawlers and drifters were equipping by hundreds for the task of mine-sweeping and to patrol against submarines while guarding the fishermen and merchant ships. The crews enrolled themselves in the Trawlers' Naval Reserve and took pride in the uniforms and rating badges. The master received the official title of "Skipper" and was so designated in the Admiralty records.

The landsman may have to be told that the steam trawler is a powerful, well-engined vessel with a bold sheer, which carries a crew of twelve to fifteen men and drags the bottom of the sea with a great bag of a net. The drifter is a smaller steamer of the same type which mostly follows the herring and sets her nets by means of cork

floats, drifting with the tide until it is time to haul them in again.

Although these armed steamers have borne the heaviest burden of the mine-sweeping operations, they have won illustrious fame also on patrol and escort duty. It was such perilous errands as these that inspired the verses, so popular in England, which were written by a naval man who knew the North Sea. They read, in part: —

"Little trawler, little trawler,
Ah, so black against the sky,
With your sides all torn and battered
And your flag but half-mast high,
Did your voyage fail to prosper?"
Cried the little trawler, "No:
We went out and did our duty,
But the skipper lies below."

"Little trawler, little trawler,
With the quaint old English name,
Did the little ships before you
Ever join in such a game?"
"Well, I've heard my mother tell me,"
Said the trawler, "long ago,
That Lord Howard had to use 'em
Just as much as Jellicoe."

These are militant crews and vessels, with very positive notions concerning the freedom of the seas, and they are inclined to become restless when restricted wholly to sweeping mines. Just how many German submarines have been destroyed by all the agencies employed against them is a

question which Great Britain prefers to veil in conjecture. There is information to indicate, however, that the fishermen of the North Sea have played their part in the campaign with a brave and deadly efficiency. One has only to visit and linger in the ports from which these craft sail to glean one vivid confirmation after another.

Such, for instance, is the yarn of the drifter C——, bound out on special duty. There was a flat calm, with a smooth sea and a summer haze. A submarine was sighted on the starboard quarter, steering northeast a speed of ten or eleven knots, with part of the conning-tower visible. The skipper of the drifter was below, at tea in his cabin, and it is a well-known fact that nothing short of a call to general quarters will separate a British shipmaster from his tea at eight bells in the afternoon.

He came on deck, sighted the enemy, and rushed to the wheel-house, putting the helm hard aport and shouting to the crew to stand by. Now, this drifter was scarcely a war-vessel, excepting in the eyes of its men, who had a sublime confidence in their one gun. Therefore, the skipper, full of courage, tea, and toast, gave the order to steer straight for the enemy and bawled into the engine-room tube to give her all the speed there was. At fifteen hundred yards he shifted the course to sheer off and opened fire at this range.

The first shot went over. The sights were lowered fifty yards and the second shot fell short only

a few feet. The third shell hit the submarine, a smashing bull's-eye on the port side of the deck. The startled submarine then altered her course about six points to the eastward and fire was continued by the drifter until two more shots had struck the enemy.

"I saw these shells burst," reported the skipper, "and the range was the same as of the other hits. The submarine heeled over to starboard and exposed her side to the later shots. We still kept up the fire, but at reduced range as we were speedily approaching the enemy. We could see the conning-tower sink below the surface and the port bilge keel came into view below the waterline as the submarine sank. A big wash came up and the last six rounds from our gun were fired into this wash at a range of about six hundred yards.

"When my crew last saw the wash, we were practically on top of the spot and the men sang out to one another, 'Hang on, she's going to bump.' However, no shock was felt, although we were right in the wash caused by the sinking. Shortly after a lot of oil came to the surface. A depth-charge was exploded over the spot. We circled around the place, and presently other drifters arrived on the scene, and we cruised there for a whole hour, but nothing more was visible. The whole engagement lasted about fifteen minutes."

It was a fishing trawler that came into port with

another story of excitement while at her trade in the middle of the North Sea.

"We were in company with twelve Scotch trawlers from Granton and Aberdeen," quoth this worthy skipper, "when considerable commotion was noticed among the other vessels, which lifted their trawls and closed in on my ship. I was told by the trawler S—— that she had seen a submarine alongside an Aberdeen trawler about nine miles to the southwest.

"I ordered the other vessels to keep clear of me and to carry on as if they were trawling and I continued trawling myself, but shifted course to the southwest. At 4.30 P.M. the trawl was hauled and again shot. Two hours later, two trawlers were seen overhauling us on our port quarter, and a submarine evidently chasing them. We kept on trawling until the submarine was about five hundred yards off, and then, considering that she was in as good a position as I was likely to get her, I ordered the fishing-gear cut away and opened fire.

"The third shot took effect. The submarine was taken by surprise before she was able to submerge. After the first hit she was seen to list heavily to port, which list she kept up until she finally went down. We steered about there until dark, and then, having no spare trawling-gear aboard, I decided to return to port."

This was unhealthy business for the submarine, and others of her kind should have heeded the les-

son and let these two-fisted fishermen severely alone. Another roving U-boat, however, was rash enough to tackle the trawler R——, and here is how the affair turned out:—

"At nine o'clock on Friday morning a steam trawler hailed me, saying, 'Cut away your gear and run for it. There is a submarine three quarters of a mile away and she has sunk a smack, and I have the crew on board.'

"'All right. Thank you,' said I, and I asked him the name of his ship, but could not understand what he shouted back at me. I then towed my trawl about fifteen minutes longer, but deciding that we were too far away from the smacks, we started to haul the trawl up.

"I was bringing the vessel around before the wind and had all but the last twenty fathoms of our trawl in when the winch refused to heave any more of it. I jumped off the bridge and asked the mate why the winch was running back. He replied: 'I don't know, Skipper. The stop valve is opened out full.'

"I tried the valve myself and found it wide open, as the mate said. I went to ask the engineman if he had full steam on and he yelled up: 'The steam is all right, Skipper. Plenty of it.'

"We reversed the winch and it hove all clear again. We had just finished hauling our net in when the mate caught me by the arm and shouted: 'There you are, Skipper! A submarine close aboard of us!'

"I looked and saw the submarine no more than a hundred yards off the starboard quarter. To the man in the wheel-house I called out: 'Hard a-starboard and a tick ahead.' Then I ran aft, taking a gun's crew with me, and opened fire. The mate followed me and said: 'Right, Skipper.' He meant that he would take charge of the gun, but I told him to go on the bridge and keep the submarine astern as I had her just where I wanted her. My first three shots hit the Hun and one of them caused an explosion, throwing up a flame four or five feet high, which was seen and heard by all on deck.

"I then fired four more shots, during which time the submarine stayed not more than a hundred and fifty yards away as if crippled and unable to steam or submerge. After my eighth shot we saw him disappear and large patches of oil floated to the surface. Later we discovered what had jammed our winch. Evidently the submarine had got entangled in the after part of our net, for we lost several fathoms of it. This is why the submarine came to the surface so close to us and stayed there."

This report was carefully reviewed by the officials of the Admiralty and in due time the following commendations were decreed: —

With reference to the submissions forwarding the report of an action between H.M. Trawler R—— and an enemy submarine, I am commanded by the

Lord Commissioners of the Admiralty to acquaint you that they consider that the submarine was severely damaged and that Skipper —— carried out the action in a very creditable manner. I am to request that an expression of their Lordships' appreciation may be conveyed to him accordingly. The King has been pleased to award the Distinguished Service Cross to Skipper —— and the Distinguished Service Medal to Mr. ——, mate of H.M. Trawler R——.

Similarly honored were the skippers of two sailing smacks who stood up to a pair of submarines and whipped them. It may be worth remark, in passing, that the German has made naval warfare singularly monotonous in its essential features. It has been reduced to the problem of exterminating the submarine. The successful attacks against this skulking craft, whether by destroyer, trawler, or armed merchantmen, are alike in most particulars, and conspicuously absent is all the varied and crowded confusion of episode familiar to the annals of conflict upon the sea.

Combat with the submarine is exciting enough for those engaged in it, and their gallantry is superb, but the chief gratification in reading or listening to the recital is that another U-boat has been stricken from the list. This is the excuse, in a way, for recounting such an adventure as that of these two dauntless North Sea skippers.

When in a position about seventeen miles southeast from S——, two German submarines were sighted. They both approached the smacks on the

surface. One of them came within three hundred yards of the —— and waved a flag for the smack to move closer to him, at the same time firing with a machine gun, the vessel being hit many times, but with no casualties.

This smack then threw out her small boat to abandon ship. In the meantime this submarine had submerged and come up again, within a hundred yards of the smack. One of the German officers came out of the conning-tower and hailed the skipper, telling him to leave the smack as he intended to torpedo it.

The skipper then ordered fire to be opened on the submarine. The first round of the smack's gun missed, but the third shot hit the hull and burst, presumably inside. The enemy disappeared at once and it would appear almost certain that she was destroyed.

The second submarine, showing only a periscope, had gone to the eastward of one of the other smacks. This second submarine cruised around with her periscope above water, while the smack kept steering a course to bring the periscope ahead whenever it could be seen. The U-boat finally submerged several times, coming up, at length, on the starboard bow so that the whole of her upper deck and conning-tower were visible.

The skipper then put the helm hard over so as to bring the submarine on the smack's broadside. A round was then fired from the smack's gun. It hit the base of the conning-tower and exploded, throwing pieces of the submarine into the water on all sides. At this moment a torpedo passed under the stern of the smack, missing her by six or eight feet.

On being struck by the shell the submarine half-turned over and plunged down bows first, disappearing so quickly that there was no time for a second shot

at her. The last seen of her was the after part of the upper deck and large bubbles and oil pouring up from the bottom.

This is the breed of North Sea trawler skippers who fish or hunt the U-boat or take their turn at mine-sweeping as their admirals may direct. I first met them in a port from which the smacks still sail boldly out to harvest the herring and cod. In days of peace it was a summer resort of some note, with a broad white beach, the pleasant sound of surf, large hotels facing the sea, and a long pier upon which there was music and dancing.

The holiday crowds come no more and many residents have moved inland, for there are shattered houses to show where the German light cruisers shelled the town, and the Zeppelins and airplanes have bombed it in their playful manner. The military damage has been negligible, but a few families have been wiped out.

Out of the narrow harbor entrance the steam trawlers daily file seaward in groups to sweep for mines. Once past the lighthouse they pair off and drop the gear over the stern. The sea may be running nastily, but they sheer close enough to each other to fling a heaving line across and so pay out the end of the wire cable which is dragged between them, many feet beneath the surface.

Then they veer apart to move abreast at a few knots an hour while the "kites" or weighted timber frames splash overboard and sink to hold

the cable or sweep-wire at the proper depth. The method is simple enough, two steamers towing between them a rope several hundred feet long which will saw through and cut the mooring of any mine encountered. Three pairs of trawlers, sweeping in formation, clear a certain stretch of channel, so many miles in one direction, then turn and go back again, anchoring for the night, resuming work at daylight, and so on for ten or a dozen days of duty before they see port again.

Sometimes a trawler group may sweep and find never a mine. Again, they may steam into a nest of them, a submarine cargo freshly sown, the deadly contrivances bobbing into view one after another as the drag-wire shears them free. It is obvious that the trawler runs several kinds of risk. Her skipper hopes the mines may be caught by the wire instead of colliding with the bottom of his ship, but he never can tell. He knows not where they are and he steers among them, trusting to luck, and aware that there will be a missing trawler if he blindly bumps one. His courses lead him through live mine-fields, which accounts for the lengthy honor roll of ships and men already sacrificed in order that other vessels might pass secure from harm.

It is important that the pair of trawlers keep evenly abreast, watching their speed and position as carefully as the most exacting admiral of a battle squadron. So long as this is done, the mine will be caught and cut in the middle of the trailing

BRITISH SAILORS PREPARING NETS TO AID IN THE DESTRUCTION OF SUBMARINES

SKIPPER B. NEWSON, D.S.M., WHO HAS DONE MUCH VALUABLE WAR WORK AT SEA, VISITS AN OLD FISHING FRIEND

sweep-wire. If one trawler sags behind the other, the mine will, of course, slide along the wire toward the trawler nearest it and perhaps explode close aboard.

There are also the "kites" which tow under water, and now and then a mine becomes entangled in one of them, a ticklish mischance when the winch hauls the floundering structure of planks up the vessel's side. There is one seaman of the trawler fleet who wears a ribbon on his blue jersey because he stood by the after winch when the rest of the crew took to their heels, for which they could not be very harshly blamed.

The kite-wire was winding in on the great steel drum, and the massive timber frame came heaving out of the sea to bang against the steamer's plates before it was hoisted on deck. It fetched up with it a large, gray bulbous object sprouting several horns, which was instantly identified, without need of argument. There seemed no possibility of preventing it from coming aboard or of keeping the swaying kite from thumping against it.

Never did destruction seem more inevitable and unexpected. The one man whose wits were not instantly scrambled by this fearsome sight concluded to try to stop the winch in time, although there was not one chance in a hundred that the trick could be done.

He won.

Very tenderly the mine was lowered, and the men

who had been surprised into scampering forward for their lives now volunteered for the delicate job of getting into a boat and cutting the infernal machine clear of the kite.

Once set free and floating, the mines are sunk by means of rifle-fire from the decks of the trawlers. The bullets drill holes in the buoyancy chamber which soon fills with water. The mine seldom explodes when hit in this manner because the detonating mechanism is under water and thereby protected. It happens, however, that a bullet hits the horn of a mine now and then, or the sea is rough, and then the trawler crews dodge whizzing fragments of steel, if they are quick enough, while the ship reels and quivers as though she had rammed a rock.

In general charge of each group of mine-sweeping trawlers is one called the flagship, from which a commissioned officer of the Naval Reserve directs the operations of his several skippers. My trawler shipmate, the lieutenant, had come back from the Far East in response to England's call for trained seamen. His had been the exotic career of an officer in the Chinese Navy when duty shifted him to the bridge of a North Sea trawler and the command of hardy fishermen out of Lowestoft and Yarmouth instead of a noisy watch of slant-eyed, Celestial bluejackets.

This dauntless little flagship of his had a skipper of her own, a brawny, amiable man who lacked

all imagination when discussing the trade of mine-sweeping.

"You get blowed up or you don't," was his hearty epitome as he stood at an open window of the wheel-house and stared at the hard, gray sea. The winter wind could not make him shiver. He had been seasoned by twenty years of trawling in all weather, blow high, blow low. He desired to spin a yarn, but not about himself, so he was moved to begin, after long cogitation: —

"There's a red-headed, cross-eyed lump of a boy that you ought to look up when you go out on the Dover patrol. I forget the name, but they'll very likely find him for you. In my opinion he's a lad that has had what you might call a bit of experience. You might even say it was excitin'.

"Yes, I'll go so far as to state that he's had a fair lively time of it. Blowed up in five different trawlers, one after another. And twice he was the only survivor. He told me last time he come home on leave, between disasters, that he did n't get time to feel acquainted in a vessel before she hit a mine and he was swimmin' for it with nobody or thereabouts to keep him company.

"He gets fished out and baled out and lugged ashore and signs on in another trawler, the same as a matter o' habit. There's a lot in gettin' used to it. Of course, it's well known that you can't drown a lad what's both red-headed and cross-eyed, and the only way to get rid of him is to hang him.

"This one's mother begins to feel worried for fear he may get hurt or something happen to him. Women are nervous by nature, as ye well know. Gettin' blowed up five times is n't so remarkable, but bein' the sole survivor of two crews does seem odd to me."

The lieutenant agreed to this. What disturbed him, he confessed, was to have his six trawlers all nicely in couples and following the flagship at proper intervals, then to hear the devil of a bang, and look back and see one trawler not there at all — blown up with all hands. The last time he had looked over the list, eighty trawler skippers had been lost, which meant a lot more ships than this, of course. His own port had fitted more than a thousand trawlers and drifters with mine-sweeping gear. They had been sent all over the shop, to help the Russians in the White Sea, to clear the way for the French and English fleets in the Dardanelles, to potter about the Mediterranean and even as far as the Cape. Ships flying neutral flags had dropped mines in all sorts of places, even along the African coast.

The conversation checked abruptly. The wheelhouse windows rattled as though in an earthquake, and the tea-pot hopped from the chart-table and smashed on the floor. It was the devil of a bang. The skipper poked his head out to gaze astern and the lieutenant made for the deck. There were actually traces of excitement in his demeanor.

A vast eruption of water, black and dirty, lifted

two hundred feet above the agitated sea. The six trawlers were still afloat. One counted them, breathlessly, and counted them again to make certain. The nearest pair were rolling violently, but the flag-hoists were climbing to the signal yards to say that no damage was done.

"A close shave, that," said the lieutenant, reading the nearest string of flags. "That mine must have exploded almost between them. The sweep-wire touched it off, I imagine."

CHAPTER X

OFF THE BOLD HEADLANDS OF FRANCE

ENGLAND, France, the United States, — the White Ensign, the Tri-color, the Stars and Stripes, — together they guard the Atlantic and protect the roads that lead to and from its ports. The destroyer fleet was the first American force to join the Allied operations in the war-zone, and for this reason its achievements were foremost in the popular mind. It has deserved all the praise and recognition that could be offered, and made possible the movement of troops and supplies with surprisingly small loss.

For a time the work of the American ships sent to assist the French off the shores of Brittany seemed to be rather obscured and overlooked. After going to sea with them all, destroyers, submarines, trawlers, and battleships, my own conclusion was that this naval force of ours had earned its own fair share of glory in the windy Bay of Biscay. They called it "The Suicide Fleet" when it sailed from home in the summer, a merry jest to indicate the odds laid against the vessels in nautical circles.

The survivors, still plugging away at it, regard these doleful predictions as poor stuff. They weathered a winter of gales and fogs, and submarines, coastwise and offshore, as rough a task

AMERICAN NAVAL YACHTS IN A HARBOR OF FRANCE

as mariners could face, mostly in yachts whose former owners never dreamed that they could endure such desperate ordeals.

They were no regular navy crews that carried these converted pleasure craft across the Atlantic, but Reserves, Naval Militia, and recruits with little training. The skipper, as a rule, was the only seasoned naval officer, and the serious young men who paced the bridge with him were brokers, lawyers, merchants, chief clerks, learning to serve their country between spells of seasickness.

Among the enlisted men there might be a few real bluejackets and a veteran petty officer or two, but the average ran to stalwart youths from the colleges who dreamed of chasing submarines and were ready to eat 'em alive. No adversity could cloud their spirits. They had escaped from the tame routine of the Atlantic coast patrol and were keen to follow the ball and hit the line hard.

The son of the man who had owned the yacht might be peeling spuds or washing down decks, his dearest ambition to win a rating as a boatswain's mate, or you were likely to chat with a modest, respectful able seaman who could buy a boat or two without crippling his bank account. It was blue-water democracy, all hands together, eager to make an efficient ship as soon as possible.

This was no training cruise, please note, but the stern business of war into which they had been flung at short notice. The American soldier has

his months of intensive training before he is put into the front-line trenches, but these zealous, unterrified tars were told to take their ships and go to it, the sooner the quicker.

France had appealed for ships to help patrol her Atlantic coast. The need was most urgent. By strategic necessity her chief naval activities were based in the Mediterranean. The United States promised to send France such ships as could be spared, without waiting for new fleets of destroyers to be commissioned. It was the best that could be done at the time, and this is why the yachts went bravely over to undertake what would have been a man's-size job for regular navy flotillas.

Beautiful vessels these were when their patriotic owners turned them over to the Navy Department, but scarcely fitted for battering service in the war-zone. Ruthlessly their amateur crew fell upon the luxurious fittings and palatial quarters and made them suit their own needs, carpentering while at sea, keeping at it during every spare hour in port.

Saloons panelled in mahogany were crowded with bunks and mess-tables, plate-glass windows were boarded up with storm shutters, rough partitions knocked together anywhere and anyhow, while racks of rifles and cutlasses decorated walls once sacred to the costly paintings of marine artists of distinction. Gun platforms covered the immaculate decks, and the ready depth-bombs disfigured the graceful overhang.

Such a seagoing yacht as this now resembled an extremely elegant gentleman who had jumped into overalls, rolled up his sleeves, spat on his hands, and was prepared to tackle any old stunt that came his way.

And so they came rolling into the Bay of Biscay and sighted the bold headlands of France, not to mention innumerable reefs, shoals, and tricky channels, enough to daunt far wiser sailor-men. Officers and men were shaken down a bit by this time, fairly well acquainted with the ship and each other, and sublimely convinced, which was the really important thing, that they were about to show a few French admirals that this piece of Uncle Sam's Navy could deliver the goods as well as some others.

An ancient French port, rich in memories of sea-fights, blockades, and great sailors, welcomed the yachts and took them very seriously. They signified a maritime partnership and alliance that recalled the thrilling deeds of John Paul Jones, who also knew this Breton coast and people. They were the vanguard of a fleet, and they had come to aid in fetching in from sea the transports laden with American troops.

The port took on a brighter aspect and tried to forget its many sorrows — a large city filled with the widows and orphans of sailors, its young men all gone, the great naval base tenanted by only a few cruisers, destroyers, and trawlers.

The coming of the American yachts foretold a tremendous activity, quays and decks and roadstead crowded with cargo ships, the sheds and water-front heaped with mountains of food and supplies for General Pershing's army. Great steamers moved in and emptied their decks of thousands of soldiers who vanished in an uncanny manner as fast as they could be loaded into trains and hurried off to Somewhere in France.

The American Army was soon conspicuous, afloat and ashore, but bringing it thither was a navy job, and the port remained as always, true to its naval traditions, an admiral looming larger than a general.

It was singularly fortunate that such a man as Rear Admiral Wilson was selected to command the American naval forces in France. As the war goes on, the importance of his task will vastly increase and many more ships will be placed at his disposal. Meanwhile he has perfected an organization of the French coast, and employed to the best advantage such vessels as have been granted him, the yachts and a certain number of destroyers. More than this, he has the tact and sympathy so essential for coöperation with the French Navy and people.

These bold seagoing yachts — some covered with gray paint, others disguised by delirious schemes of *camouflage* — soon discovered that the plan of operation was to set them going and keep them going as long as they could hold together. They were

REAR-ADMIRAL H. B. WILSON
Commanding American Naval Forces in France

expected to help with the overseas convoys from American ports, and this was the spectacular part of the programme; but more arduous and unremitting was the responsibility of protecting the coastwise convoys which daily pass up and down the French coast in mighty processions of commerce between the Mediterranean, Spanish, and French ports and the English Channel and beyond.

The yachts had to learn this game, and they learned it at night, finding their courses in darkness and thick weather, herding a nervous, clumsy flock of twenty or thirty merchant ships, driving ahead when cautious pilots desired to anchor, joyously hoping and yearning for a shot at a submarine, winning their way to port where they shoved more coal aboard and made ready for sea again.

The skipper of one of these industrious craft was heard to say, when he came ashore: "It's darn funny, but I made that southern convoy run for four months without ever seeing it. Honest fact! I happened to do the trip by daylight last week and it sort of puzzled me. We got used to ambling along at night and doping out our bearings by the lights when we could see them, or making guesses when we could n't."

It is different from any other American naval duty demanded by the war because the men and ships seemed quite unfitted for it when they started out. They have adapted themselves to the

conditions thrust upon them, taking the cards as they were dealt and playing their hand well, which seems to exemplify the American spirit at its best. Many of the men in the crews made heavy sacrifices to join the service, but there was little grumbling, and the daily discomforts at sea have no terrors for bluejackets who can sing while they sweat for hours, all black with grime, passing coal in baskets from the depths of a barge alongside.

Your crack destroyer goes clear of this, for she takes in her fuel with a hose from the oil-tanker, and there is a real lay-off for the crew while in port.

The captains of these yachts, ranking as commanders and lieutenant-commanders in the Regular Navy, have also learned many interesting things, among them the fact that the average intelligent American who has succeeded in other kinds of work ashore can be fashioned into a useful watch officer or seaman in surprisingly short order. He lacks the technical training and discipline of Annapolis and he would be far more efficient if he had it, but he gets hold of the essentials in the rough school of experience and takes his medicine like a man.

There were misfits and incompetents in these crews, of course, but they were weeded out and sent home or shifted to other duties. The doctrine of the survival of the fittest rules in "The Suicide Fleet," with an admiral as ready to punish delinquents as he is to praise and reward those who stand the test. He was given these complements

of raw reserves and he made the best of it, realizing that, in a large measure, their zealous devotion to their service and pride in being in the great game made up for the lack of rigorous naval training.

As an experiment it should have a distinct value at home. The war-time expansion of the American Navy has been so great that the percentage of thoroughly prepared officers and men seems absurdly inadequate. But the winter's work of the little fleet that was hammered about in the Bay of Biscay proved that young men with the right stuff in them can be taught enough seamanship in a few months to serve the purpose.

One yacht was torpedoed with heavy loss of life and another broke her back on a reef, but similar disasters have happened to the British and American destroyer fleets and are inevitable in the war-zone. The wonder is that the yachts have done so well and stood their punishment so long.

"How is the old packet?" cried my friend, the commander, over the early morning coffee in the chart-room. He was guiltless of exaggeration, but sometimes laid it on with broad strokes. "Some boat, believe me, even if we did have to brace her with two-by-fours inside the bow where that last blow buckled her frames. You can do a lot with odd bits of timber when there's no time to go into dock. A couple of seas walloped the port side and bent the plates in, and she has worked so limber

that she opens like a basket in a heavy seaway. That makes the decks leaky, of course, and it gets damp below.

"What do you expect? That last gale was a snoozer, and we were five hundred miles offshore with a bunch of transports. Oh, yes, we'll lay up for an overhaul before she just naturally falls apart, but meanwhile just tell them we were looking well and glad to be among those present."

These yachts lack the speed of a destroyer for taking the offensive against the submarine, but they try to make up for it by no end of drill at the guns and a sincere conviction that they are a match for any Hun that ever showed a periscope. It was one of the smaller boats of the fleet that fell afoul of a U-boat close in to the coast, in a wicked gale of wind that made the problem of staying afloat and off the rocks exceedingly precarious. The big seas were sweeping the decks, the watch clinging to life-lines, and the yacht coming up now and then to show little more than a funnel and a bridge.

Heading into it, her speed was knocked down to two knots, scarcely more than steerage-way, when a submarine was sighted no more than three hundred yards distant, rolling near the surface, having come up to get its bearings and avoid stranding in the shoal water near by.

Here they were, side by side, the weather far too heavy to use gun or torpedo. The general quar-

ters alarm was sounded on the yacht whose half-drowned crew spluttered salt water and profanity at the submarine. The German skipper, no doubt, returned the compliments in kind.

"It was impossible to keep the forward gun's crew at their stations," sadly reported the commander of the yacht, "as there was danger of their being washed overboard. The after gun's crew tried to train on the submarine, but the seas were breaking over and they were unable to fire before the enemy submerged. It was impossible to attempt to use a depth-charge because the speed of the ship had been so reduced, and I preferred to keep headed into it, — with the after gun ready for action, — rather than turn into the trough of the sea and endeavor to close in on the submarine. It was showing four or five feet of two periscopes when first seen and submerged three different times. When last sighted it had drawn away to a distance of about six hundred yards."

In this sociable manner they met and parted, and when the yacht returned to port her skipper was heartlessly guyed by his friends who accused him of acting as a pilot for the submarine and showing it the way into deep water. The Hun followed along astern, said they, and was mighty thankful for the courteous assistance.

Possibly this was the U-boat commander known to the American fleet as "Mr. Kelly," a genial sport who behaved like a real human being, a rare

exception to the rule. It was this "Kelly" person who broke into the wireless while lying off the French coast and sent this impertinent message in plain English: —

Your war news very interesting, but two or three words were badly sent. Please repeat and oblige.

After listening a while longer he shot this radio farewell into the air: —

Good-bye. I can waste no more time on you.

Many brave things have been done by the men of these American ships, and one of them stands out superbly. It was the rescue of a man overboard in the midst of a storm even wilder than the one just mentioned. This vessel was caught out in it while on convoy duty and her survival was little short of a miracle. The French mariners called it the worst blow the Bay of Biscay had seen in eight years. Its violence was that of a hurricane, with a wind velocity of a hundred miles an hour, such a storm as would have sorely pounded and damaged a great Atlantic liner.

The yacht was more or less knocked into kindling wood, both masts broken off and rolled out of her, all three boats smashed and carried away, decks gutted, life-rails splintered, compartments flooded. The ship was rolling fifty-five degrees, or almost flat on her side, and when she plunged more than half the length of her keel was in the air.

In the midst of it the steering-gear jammed and

AN AMERICAN YACHT'S STEERING-GEAR DISABLED IN A HEAVY SEA

SIGHTING A SUBMARINE ON AN AMERICAN YACHT

the ship was likely to broach to and founder unless it could be cleared. The chief quartermaster, E. H. Robertson, volunteered for the job and was presently washed overboard, carried off to leeward on the back of a roaring sea.

There was not one chance in a million of saving him. He was as good as dead and vanished. The ship was running before the storm and a quarter of an hour passed before she could be brought to, a very dangerous manœuvre which again swept her clean. The quartermaster had not gone down, but was visible off the lee bow, swimming with the courage of a man who refused to surrender to the inevitable.

Lines were thrown to him, but he was unable to reach them. Even if the boats had not been smashed it would have been impossible to launch one. A life-raft was shoved over and it floated toward Robertson so that he could clutch it and hang on.

This was merely to prolong his agony, however, for he could do nothing more to help himself. He had been in the water seventeen minutes, buffeted, strangling, freezing. The month was December, the temperature of the sea thirty-six degrees.

Among those who looked on and pitied the exhausted man who had made such a plucky fight of it was the ship's cook, Joseph Marcio. His realm of pots and pans being wrecked and awash, he turned his attention to the affair of the drown-

ing quartermaster. Knotting a line about his middle and making no fuss about it, he jumped into the sea and swam to Robertson, this veritable porpoise of a sea-cook with a soul as big as all outdoors.

The ship had some way on her and could not be wholly stopped. It happened, therefore, that when the cook grabbed the quartermaster they were slowly towed through the seas. The strain was terrific and the rope almost cut the cook in two, but he clung to his man until they were fetched alongside and hauled aboard together.

The quartermaster was unconscious and the cook also collapsed on deck, but was thawed out with no serious damage. This Joseph Marcio was promoted to the rating of a chief commissary steward in recognition of the deed and was recommended for the gold life-saving medal of the Navy Department.

The danger and hardship of winter weather on the French coast, exposed to it day in and day out while the convoys come and go, is incidental to the routine of the warfare against the German submarine, which is the vital issue. The French Navy aids and coöperates with armed trawlers, destroyers, seaplanes, and torpedo-boats. Considering the means at hand, the great coastwise convoys have been guarded wonderfully well, with a small percentage of loss.

Fritz may be hardy and dogged in the use of the

submarine, but he is seldom audacious. He plays it safe, and there may be iron in his blood, but there is no flame of daring, no love for the hazardous enterprise which stakes all on a throw of the dice.

During the winter he once ventured inshore and ran the risk of reefs and shoaling water to attack a coastwise convoy comprising more than a score of ships. Approaching them unseen, at midnight, he ran amuck like a wolf in a sheep pasture, sinking four of the steamers before the vessels of the armed escort had caught a glimpse of him. One of the victims was the American freighter, Harry Luckenbach, which floated eight minutes after being torpedoed. Stricken ships usually plunge under much quicker than this.

The crew of thirty-three men went into the water on rafts, bits of wreckage, in a boat which was shattered and useless. Other ships were blown up and sinking near them. The affrighted whistles of endangered steamers, the muffled explosions, the cries of dozens of men drowning or floundering about in the darkness, the noise of guns firing blindly at what they fancied to be the submarine, made a very fair inferno of this bit of the Breton coast.

One of the American yachts steamed into this tragic confusion and switched on her searchlight, regardless of the fact that it blazoned her against the night as the easy target for another torpedo.

She found herself among the castaways of the Harry Luckenbach. The air was full of their voices coming out of the gloom, men whose blood was already congealed by the icy water, whose throats were contracted and teeth locked so that they had become inarticulate and could only moan.

The searchlight began to pick them out, but it was largely by chance. Its bright beam might sweep within a few feet of a poor wretch and yet miss him for the time. When beyond the light they were invisible, groping and splashing with no sense of direction, scattering themselves over a continually widening area.

The searchlight also illumined the Harry Luckenbach just before she dived under. The American ensign was streaming from its halliards, a picture to hold in mind. It was later learned that one of these merchant seamen, of a crew raked up anyhow on the water-front of New York, had bethought himself to run up the Stars and Stripes in the last moment and let the old hooker plunge to Davy Jones with her colors flying.

More than this, when they were in the water and before the cold gripped their hearts, a few of these sailors raised a cheer for the flag and even tried to pipe up "The Star-Spangled Banner." A dramatic incident and very genuine, for there was no touch of the grandstand in it. They expected to be drowned, every mother's son of them, and

AMERICAN YACHT CREWS

they did not even know that the yacht was heading in to pick them up.

It was such a crew as you might look for on a cargo steamer in war-time, Spaniards, negroes, Norwegians, a few Americans, — many of them hard cases, for there is small room for choice when it comes to signing on a ship's company nowadays.

One or two at a time they were fished aboard the yacht until twenty-six had been accounted for. There was a man of them who got his hands on a rope which was tossed from the deck. He was at the last gasp, but his fingers closed and, slowly, painfully, he hauled in the rope hand over hand. The ship was moving under considerable headway and the bluejacket who held the other end was compelled to let go. The castaway in the water was unaware of this, and he continued fisting himself along the rope as his last effort and his one hope of salvation. Finally he came to the end of it and found there was nothing there. The searchlight revealed the expression of his face, of such agonized, bewildered disappointment as was beyond words.

Again the ship moved toward him and the bight of a line was deftly dropped over his shoulders and he was safely hoisted aboard. The end of the other rope was still in his hands, and his fingers could not be pried loose from it without breaking the bones. The rope was therefore cut, leaving him with a bit of it which he released two hours later.

The Navy doctor who attended these survivors in the cabins of the yacht confidently expected several of them to die on his hands, but they fooled him to a man. One had a compound fracture of the leg, the bone badly protruding, but he was conscious and urged that he await his turn until the others were looked after. So he sprawled upon a ward-room transom, uttering never a groan, and huskily suggested: —

"Get those poor stiffs limbered up first, Doc, and see if there's a kick in 'em. My bum leg? Sure it hurts, — but I'm in no hurry. Say, listen to this. One of these guys was beggin' for his mother while we were in the water. Story-book stuff like we used to read, uh? I never heard it really happen before."

The doctor had gained a wide experience in accident cases before he chucked up his practice to take on as a two-striper in the Navy, but he had never seen men literally rigid from exposure as were these men of the Harry Luckenbach. There was no more bending them than if they had been cast-iron statuary on somebody's front lawn. The master of the lost steamer was taken out of a water-logged boat in which he sat doubled up with chin and knees together. They had to lift him aboard in this grotesque posture, for two strong sailors were unable to straighten him out. Others who had been floating could not be unhinged and made to sit down or to relax their hold of pieces

of wreckage and life-belts. They were "stiffs" and extraordinary ones.

An officer of the freighter thawed, at length, and his tongue likewise became loosened. With intense vehemence he declared: —

"As soon as I step ashore in New York I'm going to load my old shotgun and beat it across the river to Hoboken and shoot the deadlights out of the first —— German that crosses my bows. Then I'm going to get another ship, by God, and come over here again."

Another of this crew, a roustabout from a Bowery lodging-house, was too tough to be frozen or drowned, and when they lugged him into the cabin by the heels there was breath enough in him to croak, with a ghost of a grin: —

"Home was never like this. Where do we go from here?"

The following letter was later received, to be prized by the yacht's company as part of their record in the war-zone: —

The officers and crew of the Harry Luckenbach wish to express their appreciation and gratitude to the officers and men of the U.S.S. —— for their bravery in rescuing us at risk of their lives in a submarine-infested area, and for their sympathy and kindness in caring for us to the full extent of their ability after we had been rescued. We honor the service of which these men are a part.

There was another merchant steamer, the Texas,

flying the French flag, that had reason to praise the valor and seamanship of the American naval force. Her master won the *Croix de Guerre* for standing by his ship, so there was glory enough for all hands concerned. The Texas was torpedoed at night when close in to the Breton coast and was rapidly sinking, but this stubborn captain resolved to try to beach her or to go down with her. His crew wished to abandon ship, but his spirit held them steady. An American yacht was close enough to respond to his call, and steamed in with him, while he replied to the encouraging signals: —

"I am still under way. Engine-room flooding, but will not abandon."

The Texas touched ground in shoal water just before she was due to founder, and this Captain Viard, at the first opportunity, sent a letter to the Consulate of the United States at the base port: —

Monsieur the Consul: —

I have the honor to report to you that we were torpedoed at five minutes to four on the morning of the twenty-ninth of November. The ship floating sufficiently, we went aground in the shelter of the Île de Groix before she sank. During all our manœuvres we were accompanied by one of the American ships-of-war, and in the morning, the second escorting ship having rejoined us, the officers commanding those two ships came aboard to find out just what had happened, and they remained beside us until help came from Lorient.

As soon as we arrived at Lorient, I tried to see the

A FRENCH DESTROYER ESCORTS A COASTWISE CONVOY

American Consul to ask him to be the interpreter of my extremely grateful sentiments to the two officers mentioned and to have the kindness to send them my very sincere thanks. As luck would have it, there was no American Consul there, and so on this occasion I have had to appeal to your kindness to help in acquitting me of this debt.

This is the unselfish and ready spirit which pervades the American Navy on foreign service. The yacht Alcedo was torpedoed off the French coast while escorting a merchant convoy. Twenty of the crew were drowned or killed by the explosion. It happened at night, and the ship seemed literally to fly to pieces, to disintegrate, and only three boats got away. They saved such survivors as were discovered in the water and were adrift fifteen hours before rescue came. The submarine rose to the surface to ask the name and tonnage of the ship, but displayed no interest in the fate of the crew.

The commander of the Alcedo took this view of the disaster: "We may have been mistaken for one of the steamers of the convoy. The enemy would not be apt to sink a yacht when he could get a big cargo boat bound in to France. That was what we were there for, to save the convoy from attack, and it passed safely through the war-zone, so perhaps we made a good finish of it."

CHAPTER XI

AT SEA WITH "THE SUICIDE FLEET"

THERE is a destroyer flotilla which operates from a French base, in coördination with the yachts, as part of the American force under the command of Rear Admiral Wilson. These destroyers are sent far out to sea for one tour and the next order may take them into the English Channel or down to the southward. They have stood up under bruising service, and like the yachts they somehow keep on going.

When I went out in one of them, it was my seventh cruise during the winter in a destroyer, American and British, and for the first time the weather bowled me off my pins and into the captain's bunk. Alas, for the pride of a man who carried an official "fitness report" which certified him as superior to seasickness! There were others, however, seasoned bluejackets with several hash-bars or enlistment stripes on their sleeves, who staggered to the rail and wanly regretted ever leaving home.

The very energetic young commander declared it to be the smoothest trip since Christmas and was quite pleased with it, but this was small consolation. A sooty coal-passer clambered up from somewhere between decks, dodged a sea that

romped aboard, wrapped his arms around a gun to save himself, and chanted this verse of the ship's own chantey: —

"Oh, it's smelly in the fo'castle,
And there's scarcely any air;
It takes mighty little motion
To make you seasick there.
Though it's very inconvenient
To be heaving up your grub,
Still we're steaming to the west'ard
And we're looking for a sub."

The yeoman had somehow glued himself to a chair which was lashed to the wall of the room and was pounding out on his typewriter what he called "a handy bunch of conversation for the use of unmarried members of the American Expeditionary Forces in France." It was to be tried out by selected volunteers from the Navy when next they should be granted shore liberty. The first instalment was arranged as follows: —

1. Bong swah, mad-mwa-zell! Voo zay tray beautiful.
2. Kesker say votr name?
3. Zhe swee Edward Jones.
4. Vooley voo take a walk?
5. Eecy ate oon fine place to sit down.
6. Bokoo moon to-night, nace paw?
7. Avay voo ever studied palmistry?
8. Donney mwa votr hand.
9. Votr hand ay tray soft.
10. Dahn lay Zaytah Unee au bokoo girls, may voo zay more beautiful than any of them.

11. Chay mwa zhe nay pah seen a girl that could touch you.
12. Voo zay oon peach.

There was little growling among these youthful tars who had been toughened by half a year of it, but to be stood on one's head in a bucking destroyer did become tiresome after a while, and a voice was raised from a gloomy bunk: —

"I wish I were a little rock, a-sitting on a hill:
I would n't do a thing all day but just be sitting still.
I would not eat, I would not sleep, I would not even wash,
But sit up there a thousand years and rest myself, by Gosh!"

The French pilot had taken this tuneful plaint unto himself as sound doctrine. The navigation of the destroyer ceased to concern him once she was off soundings. If the ocean was rough he slung a hammock close to the beams of the ward-room and swayed there for days like a sloth on a limb, showing a leg only for an infrequent cup of soup or a plate of sandwiches. He did not read, he seldom talked, but seemed capable of hibernating, of remaining comfortably comatose. The crew swore that he had once continued in this state of suspended animation for a week on end. Occasionally, when some one bumped him in passing, he might grunt a few words of comment on the weather: —

"*Il y a beaucoup de mer!*" or, "*Choc!! Tourmente! La vitesse tombe!*"

Denied the pilot's singular solace of oblivion, the crew of this destroyer seemed to find respite from its hard lot in the production of hand-made poetry. Besides the samples already quoted, this brief elegy is submitted, just as it was copied by the yeoman, at my request: —

TO BILL, THE BISCUIT-MAKER
LAMENT

On the Transfer of Ayles, Wm. H., — S.C. 3d C., U.S. N.R.F.

Our cook, the boy from Maine, has gone;
  Our biscuit-baking Bill has left;
The R—— boat knows his art no more,
  And we remain here all bereft.

No song now lightens labor in
  The galley where he reigned in state;
The mess-cooks sadly peel the spuds,
  And Berry mourns, disconsolate.

Gone is our cook, and nevermore
  Shall we with grateful gusto dent
His biscuits, nor shall scan
  His poetry, for Bill has went.

By T. Brown, Wisconsin, Ill.
Harvard Law School, '14
Seaman, U.S.N.

The merchant skippers who traverse the Bay of Biscay or join the slow convoys that trail coastwise are accustomed to vicissitudes and are not easily startled. One of them was hailed by an American destroyer commander who displayed a pardonable curiosity to know why the fore deck of the cargo steamer should be littered with brick,

stone, and mortar in disorderly heaps. The untroubled mariner, who hailed from some English Channel port, bawled through a megaphone from one end of his canvas-screened bridge: —

"Oh, you noticed the extraordinary muck, did you? It's what's left of a bleeding French lighthouse that I ran into last night while tryin' to find the channel. The thing just toppled over on deck with a frightful crash and the crew thought we were torpedoed. The idiots made for the boats, but I drove them back.

"The mate was a bit dizzied by this performance of a lighthouse coming aboard, and he stood there begging its pardon for bowlin' it over. An unusual adventure, was n't it? Deep water made in close to the rock, and I was proceeding cautiously so the steamer was merely dented a bit. Fancy arriving in port with a lighthouse spilled all over your decks. It's quite new to me. Will the French Government compel me to put up a new one, do you think?"

The American commander courteously agreed that strange things were bound to happen in time of war. When he told the yarn in the ward-room, the navigator reminded him of the famous visit of the Portuguese pilot when the destroyer was coaling at the Azores. It was shortly after a German submarine had attempted to bombard Ponta Delgada by way of diversion and as a sample of the only genuine brand of frightfulness.

It so happened that an American naval supply ship was anchored behind the breakwater. Her guns would have been blanketed by a wall of masonry but for the fact that she had been purposely listed over to one side for some repair work, and this enabled her starboard battery to get the elevation required to shoot over the breakwater. She therefore went into action against the wicked submarine and drove it away from Ponta Delgada.

The natives were grateful to the edge of hysterics, and the American supply ship was acclaimed as the savior of the city. It was such sentiments as these that the Portuguese pilot attempted to convey when he climbed aboard the destroyer and told what had occurred. When sufficiently urged, the navigator would reproduce it, having moved the chairs aside because the sketch was largely pantomine and gestures.

"My captain! A-a-a-h-h, th' dam su'marine, she attack beautiful Ponta Delgada to make it in ruins! It ees one terrible time, I tell you! Whoosh, — th' beeg shells of dat su'marine dey shoot into Ponta Delgada an' frighten dose people plenty. A-a-a-h-h, my captain! it ees the American sheep what surprise dat dam su'marine! She have beeger guns an' her sailors ees th' braves' men in the whole world!

"Whoosh, my captain, — she fire her bombs, — one — two — three — bang — bang! ! A-a-a-h-h, dat dam su'marine she get hit in the eye! She

ees filled full of terrible scares because she don't know th' American sheep is hidin' behind the wall. Whoosh, — mo' Yankee bombs drop on dat su'-marine! He t'inks American battle-sheeps shootin' him. What you say? He duck his nut plenty queeck.

"Ponta Delgada hurrahs, — hip, hip, Yankee Doodle, an' American sheep make one beeg hit! A-a-a-h-h, my captain! You ees so young and handsome! A pity you was not in Ponta Delgada when th' American sheep had bombed dat dam su'marine. Pretty girls — dancin' — music — flowers — plenty!"

On board the yachts off the French coast, the officers and men are perhaps more comfortably quartered than in the destroyers, with deck space to move about in and numerous tiled bathrooms to remind them of the vessel's former state, but the routine of duty is no less exacting, while the risk of submarine attack is greater because of the slower speed.

When I shifted from a destroyer to one of these transformed yachts, her commander had received his sailing orders to take charge of the escort of a merchant convoy bound along the coast. These ships were waiting at anchor in the outer harbor, riding deep, and their masters were summoned to the yacht for conference and instructions. They filled the ward-room, as interesting a group of mariners as possibly could be assembled, — French,

British, Scandinavian, most of them elderly, tanned, not in the least heroic to look at, but intrinsically admirable. They were quiet of manner, rather subdued, not so much perturbed as anxious, and the continual strain of their calling in wartime was graven in the lines of their faces.

They were salt-water brothers of the men whose shattered ships have sunk beneath them, who have been cast adrift to perish, who have been shelled and slain in open boats. By the grace of God they had been spared, thus far, but a submarine might be waiting to get them on this same voyage. They listened gravely while the naval commander told them what the signals were to be, the hour of departure, and how they were to handle their ships in the event of attack. They nodded, asked a few questions, and filed out of the cabin to return to their ships.

There was a livelier atmosphere when the French pilots came aboard with the officer commanding the French vessels of the naval escort. Things had to be talked over with vivacity and in great detail. It was a council of war amid the smoke of cigarettes. The American officers talked what purported to be nautical French, which is full of strange and technical phrases, and they made themselves understood. This was highly to the credit of the service. There would be a special protection of French destroyers and seaplanes for this large convoy because a submarine had

been reported as cruising directly in the course to be followed. This information seemed to make the American commander unhappy, and he confided across the table: —

"If the French intend making all this extra fuss, Fritz will get wise and beat it out to sea. The more protection the better, of course, but we might have been in for a bully good scrap. Personally I felt quite hopeful when I heard he was out there laying for us."

In the light of the moon, with a sea uncommonly tranquil, the merchant ships stole out of the harbor in the wake of the yacht which led the column. They moved like shadows, showing no lights, turning one by one to round the pinnacle rocks of the outer channel and hug the coast. Daylight disclosed them as stretching over miles of water, and the smoke of their funnels drifted to leeward like a gray cloud-bank.

They suggested in no wise the old days of tall spars and shapely hulls and the traditional romance of the sea, these uncouth freight boxes with an engine in the middle, but the spirit of true romance was in them, nevertheless, the spirit to do and dare for something more than gain.

When they straggled out of line, the guardian yacht that led them would signal to close up, and a French destroyer dashed to and fro to enforce the rules of procedure. Safely they passed the cape where the submarine was reported as ambushed,

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
BUREAU OF STEAM ENGINEERING
N. S. E. 196

U. S. NAVAL RADIO SERVICE

RECEIVED OR FILED AT STATION OR U. S. S. Wanderer BY Radio DATE 1-25-18 TIME 1.50 a M.

PREFIX		ORIGIN	NO.	OPERATOR		CHECK	FILING DATE
RADIO	NAVY	Lisbon		SNDG.	RECG. Cm	GOVT.	

VIA Direct

GOVT. All Allied Merchant Vessels
All Allied War Ships

Avis de guerre
Navires faisant route au large des côtes espagnoles doivent se tenir en de dans les trois milles du Littorl point sous marins ennemis actifs entre iles Canaries et côte d'afrique. Fin

Rec'd by M. at 2.23 a.m.

64—2055

FORWARDED TO
VIA
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PREFIX		ORIGIN	NO.	OPERATOR		CHECK	FILING DATE
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SUBMARINE WARNING RECEIVED BY AN AMERICAN YACHT

and it was presumed that he had remembered an engagement elsewhere. He was looking for an easier mark, a chance to pick off some straggler or a raid on a convoy under cover of darkness.

In the yacht's chart-room was a pile of radio messages, which had been picked up from ships in distress, a briefly worded record of tragedies in the war-zone. Now and then one of these stories had a happy ending and was artistically complete, such as this series of radio signals: —

From S.S. ——	"S.O.S. Am being torpedoed thirty miles west of ——. . . . Am being shelled. Shot just missed by 500 yards. . . . Am still being shelled. Hope to see you soon."
U.S. Yacht ——	"Keep on that course. We are heading for you. . . . Hold on. Help is coming."
S.S. ——	"Escaped. Thank you."
U.S. Yacht ——	"Well done."

Before nightfall a fog obscured the convoy and hid the coast. Down rattled the anchors, for it was dangerous to steam ahead into the bay which had been chosen as the escort's destination. Up from the galley came the yacht's ward-room cook, a chunky black rascal from Georgia, who was anxious to air a grievance to any officer willing to listen to him. Respectfully accosting the executive, he fidgeted and blurted: —

"Please, suh, does you mind speakin' to that nigger what helps me cook for you-all gen'lemen? I done put up wid him as long as I kin stand it."

"What's wrong with Jonas? You two been quarrelling again?"

"It's his puttin' on airs, suh, an' behavin' hisself in disobligin' ways."

"As bad as that? Give me the bill of particulars."

"Yes, suh. Well, he come aboa'd this trip with a drink or two under his skin. He wa'n't lit up, suh, but it jes' made him feel like puttin' on dem same ol' airs o' his. Come time to turn out, I tell him shake a leg, nigger, an' help me git breakfas' under way. He jes' lay in his bunk an' roll his eyes an' put on airs an' talk French at me."

"Is that what you mean by putting on airs, Sam? Talking French at you?"

"Yes, suh. That's what he done. He jes' lay on his back an' rolled his eyes and would n't say nothin' a-tall but *wee-wee-wee.*"

The offending Jonas was informally admonished, during which ceremony a bystander asked him if he were afraid of being torpedoed.

"Not me, suh. I'll never go down in no yacht when she busts wide open. I watch mah step. Don't ketch me strayin' far from a hatch or a ladder or a do' that leads straight to the deck, suh. I suttinly does aim to make a clean get-away."

During the night the fog rolled back a little, enough to give the commander of the yacht a glimpse of a light to guide him in. The French pilots preferred to wait for day, but the yacht sig-

nalled the ships to follow her, and boldly, adroitly led the way into a sheltered bay where they were secure against submarine attack. It was a touch of Yankee dash and resolution which was later commended both by the French and the American admirals. The officer knew the coast by day and night, and he would not risk the merchant ships outside a moment longer than could be helped, fog or no fog.

Other ships were waiting in the roadstead of this old fishing port. They were northward bound, and it was the duty of the escort to turn back with them and again pass through dangerous waters. The breeze which had lifted the fog a little soon died to a calm, and the pearly vapor closed down like a curtain. A day's delay in this snug haven was better than sailing out to grope and guess the course, with all those merchant vessels to guard and direct. To be fog-bound brought no grief to the crew of the yacht. It meant a few hours' shore liberty in a quaint and friendly Breton village in which American visitors were still a novelty.

Filled with cheerful young bluejackets, the boats made a landing in a tiny pocket of a stone-walled harbor where the fishing smacks were hauled out in rows. The cobbled streets ran steeply to the water's edge, and the small houses, gray and crumbling, jostled each other in the most neighborly, haphazard manner. This was on a Sunday, and the town wore an air of decorous leisure. The bells

were ringing in a square church tower of immemorial antiquity, and the people walked to service in their best raiment, the women wearing the headdresses and fluted collars peculiar to the province, their black velvet bodices very tight, the skirts quite ample. Their men were in sober black with wide, low-crowned felt hats.

There were girls among them, vigorous young creatures whose cheeks had been painted a vivid red by wind and rain and sun, but, alas, they walked without sweethearts. The young men were gone from their farms and fishing boats. Some were in the French Navy, wearing the cap ribbons of the "*Patrouilleurs de Bretagne*" or the "*Torpilleurs de Brest*"; others had died at Dixmude with the immortal *Fusiliers Marins* of Vice-Admiral Ronarch; and a few rested beneath the little wooden crosses behind the trenches of Picardy.

The priest in his shabby cassock halted to cry "*Bon jour*" to a group of American sailors, and his worn face was bright with affectionate regard. Elderly fishermen joined him. The clatter of their wooden shoes was like the sound of passing cavalry. They were harsh-featured, sober men, — true Bretons who were more at ease upon swaying decks and moved somewhat clumsily ashore. Children played truant from their mothers and smiled at these tall men of "*la marine des États-Unis*" who had tossed coppers to them during a previous visit.

It was a reception which threatened to become an

ovation. One of the bluejackets said to his comrades: —

"This reminds me of the way they greet us in Ireland. It's so different."

The priest stepped aside to shake hands with the officers from the yacht who were bound out for a country stroll before dining at the little hotel. It was his pleasure to acquaint them with the results of a certain act of generosity which they had entrusted to him. The young girl and her sister who had invested their last franc to buy cloth with which to sew blouses, *matériel de navire*, for the sailors of the Russian gunboat which had been so long anchored in the bay, — it had been a sad hour when the vessel sailed and the poor sisters were left with the *équipement* on their hands, unpaid for. The Russians, no doubt, were without money themselves, — the Revolution had confused everything for them, — they were so much *débris de mer*.

It was an excuse, but these girls, made fatherless by the war, suffered a grave disaster. They had not appealed to charity, but the American officers had heard the story. That was enough, exclaimed the priest, his eyes suffused with feeling. The money which they so freely offered had been used with care and discretion. The sisters were now freed from the shadow of want and despair. *Le Bon Dieu* would bless the benefactors.

The benefactors appeared sheepishly embarrassed and edged away from the crowd. They were afraid

their men might have overheard the tale of the voluble priest. What the ward-room did with its money was not for the fo'castle to know. The spruce bluejackets were otherwise engaged, however, for one of them had sociably wandered into a kitchen near by and discovered a wonderful square-rigged ship in a wine bottle upon the mantel over the huge fireplace. All other ships in bottles seemed crude beside this one.

Grandmother was delighted to show it, and presently her husband limped in and proudly confessed that he was the artist. The kitchen filled with American sailors who yearned for little ships in bottles. *Voilà!* There were others in the village. Small boys were sent scampering in search of them. The visitors sat around the polished wooden table in the low room, whose rafters were black with smoke, and were made to feel at home. It was an honor to receive them. Grandfather found bottles which contained *vin ordinaire*, instead of little ships, and toasts were drunk to France and America.

The small boys returned, running so fast that their wooden shoes flew off, and reported that several mariners were *en route* with ships that they had whittled. There was a clamor of bargaining over price, amid much laughter. Twenty francs seemed to be agreeable to both sides. The sailors tucked the souvenirs inside their blouses and rambled out to make more friends.

I tramped the highway with the four officers and

we came back to the hotel with gorgeous appetites. There might be lack of food in Brittany, but nothing was too good for the American Navy. The hospitality and charm of the place were unforgettable. It was to be a dinner cooked especially, instead of the *table d'hôte*. Madame would offer nothing less to this party. There were seven courses, served beside an open fire, and the cost was a trifle less than a dollar a plate. We all spoke at once: —

"Could you beat it? Here's where I bring my family for a summer after the war."

"The high cost of living has n't touched 'em. They don't know what it is. One of those pretty little villas on the sea!"

"And a fine beach for the children to play on. U-m-m, that lobster, *and* the *veal cutlet and* the peas *and* the filet of beef *and* — and the *salad* and *the* cream custard for dessert! Twenty-nine francs for the five of us. *Oh, boy!*"

"You forgot the soup, and the black coffee, and three bottles of *vin blanc*," said the doctor. "Who would n't sell a farm and go to sea?"

The dinner was perfect, but the service was a trifle interrupted and uncertain. The bluejackets had found the parlor and it contained a piano. A man from Princeton proceeded to tickle those keys to ragtime, and, presto, his shipmates were dancing. The rollicking harmony poured into the dining-room, and the pretty Breton waitresses were instantly lured to the parlor door. First one, then

another, vanished to dance with a fine young American sailor. Thereafter these rosy damsels danced between courses, and nobody minded if the peas were cold.

"These charming young persons are having the time of their lives," said the doctor, who could not hide a bald spot. "They pass me up because I'm growing old and nobody cares. But somebody ought to pay a little attention to Anne."

Yes, Anne had been neglected. It was obvious when one's attention was called to the case. She had shyly hovered in the dining-room, with a wistful smile and a finger in her mouth, her courage faltering, at some distance from the parlor door. Fresh from the country was little Anne, her years perhaps seventeen, and she desired to join the party, but did n't know quite how. The artless manœuvres of Anne had touched the doctor's soft heart. It would not do for him to intrude upon the company in the parlor and find a partner for Anne. Naval etiquette forbade it. The enlisted men were enjoying their own entertainment and the officers had not been invited. Soon the hour came to rejoin the liberty boats at the quay. The sailors left the hotel, after lingering farewells with their partners, whose pink head-dresses were no brighter than their cheeks. And nobody had danced with little Anne.

"Please go in and beat the piano, Skipper," spoke up the chivalrous doctor. "I shall now give

Anne a whirl. Brutes! Are you going to leave the child in tears?"

And so Anne danced and forgot her shyness. The doctor could shake a loose foot with any of them, and Anne's slippers fairly twinkled. Her face was radiant, and the other girls were visibly impressed. Their young men had been *très galant* and handsome, but they were sailors, *matelots*, and Anne, the obscure, was dancing with an American *officier* with gold stripes on his sleeves, at least a *lieutenant de vaisseau*, possibly *un capitaine de frégate*. It was Anne's perfect day!

The fog which had held the ships was almost gone from the bay, and a red moon climbed up from the sea. It was time to go aboard and signal the merchant convoy to weigh anchor. Dinner at the hotel had been a pleasant interlude, but it was not getting on with the war. Madame and her sister-in-law and her two daughters said *au revoir*, but not good-bye. They came into the street to wave farewells in the moonlight. It was like a family separation. To have welcomed the American Navy! It was memorable!

The doctor showed traces of emotion and had to be towed away by the arm. He was looking for little Anne.

CHAPTER XII

BRAVE BRETON PORTS AND PEOPLE

THE merchant seamen of the convoys, American, British, French, and Italian, who are doing so much to win the war, have received few medals and ribbons, but they have earned them nevertheless. Comparable with them for unassuming valor are the fishermen and sailors of the French coast who ply their trade in waters where the submarines spare them not. The American yachts and destroyers pass them at sea, — ketches, luggers, and trawlers, — lifting red sails offshore, with a friendly "Allo," a flourish of tasselled caps, and the glow of affectionate gratitude on the brown, wrinkled Breton faces.

Their stories of disaster, even when translated from the reports turned in to their admirals, have a note of appeal, the intimate human touch, that is seldom found in similar documents elsewhere. I venture to quote several of them, episodes which have been talked about in port.

The trawler Saint Mathieu left —— to go fishing one hundred miles south-south-west of the Raz de Sein. Bad weather delayed him until the lookout at the gun saw a boat on the horizon and several moments later a shell passed over the Saint Mathieu. The captain immediately took in his nets and went to battle stations and headed for the enemy, at the

same time opening fire with the bow gun at 6500 metres. The submarine also headed toward him while he continued his fire in a spirited manner.

A shell passed to starboard of the Saint Mathieu, shattering the upper part and wounding the man at the wheel. Perceiving that the fire of the submarine was well regulated, the captain of the Saint Mathieu steered to port and encouraged his crew by showing them that their fire was also good, since the shells were falling near the submarine.

Unfortunately a shell fell on the bow of the Saint Mathieu, wounding three of the gun's crew. The only survivor of the group continued the fire until the ammunition was exhausted. The submarine was then only 1200 metres away and his fire was extremely accurate. The second mate of the Saint Mathieu was now killed and a sailor wounded. The captain was unable to reply to the enemy's fire, so he decided to stop and abandon.

Of his crew of thirteen men, four had been killed and four badly wounded. Nearly all of the others were injured by the explosions. The boat left the Saint Mathieu and the submarine then ceased firing, but made a signal for the boat to come near. He asked the usual questions and took an old French flag which he saw in the boat, and then went to the Saint Mathieu and sunk her with his guns.

After thirty hours, all navigation being made very difficult by bad weather, and after great suffering on the part of the crew, who were all more or less seriously wounded, a steamer was seen in the night. It was a patrol boat. The night was very dark. The patrol vessel heard the cries of the sailors, but could not see the boat.

The boat tried to pull clear, but the captain of the

Saint Mathieu was hindered in this manœuvre by the sailor Jossin, whose head had been injured in the fight and who was afflicted with delirium. The patrol vessel struck the boat which capsized, throwing all the crew into the water. As a result, four were drowned, of whom three had been wounded. The five survivors of the Saint Mathieu were landed at La Pallice. The captain and the sailor Jossin, both seriously wounded, have been given the Military Medal. All the men of the crew of the Saint Mathieu have been cited in orders.

The French schooner Germaine left port to join a convoy of sailing vessels in formation at Lezardieux. Bad weather prevented her from making way. She went as far as the English coast, but could not round Long Ship, and a storm prevailing she crossed the Channel again, close-reefed, running with double-reefed topsails. Late in one afternoon the Germaine was attacked by a submarine which fired four shells, then a volley of five shots while encircling the schooner.

The watch was well organized on board the Germaine and was ably commanded by a former sergeant of Colonial Infantry who was brave and resolute, but the sea was so heavy that the submarine was not seen before the beginning of the firing. The captain of the Germaine tacked to run with the wind, in order to make use of his two guns, and gave the order to open fire.

He climbed into the rigging himself, that he might watch the shots, which were aimed every time the adversary was visible between the troughs of water. At the fourth shot from the Germaine the submarine abandoned the struggle, swerved away from the schooner and took a course parallel to it. Fearing an

attack by night, as soon as darkness came the Germaine changed her course and headed for Saint-Malo where she arrived in safety.

The three-masted French sailing vessel Anne Antoinette, having left Havre, was on the south of the English coast, making a speed of about three knots. It was very foggy. Suddenly the captain saw an enemy submarine come forth out of the fog and pass broad on his beam. At first he took it for an English submarine chaser. However, he ordered his gun manned. At a distance of no more than 300 metres the submarine opened fire with a machine gun, following this with shell fire. The cabin boy of the Anne Antoinette was killed. In manœuvring so as to be able to use his gun the captain opened fire, and at the third shot the submarine submerged and abandoned the attack.

The French bark Nimosa left the Banks of Newfoundland, and when southwest of Scilici a submarine was encountered. It opened fire on the Nimosa and one shot struck the hull and several others the rigging. The captain gave an order to abandon ship which was done in dories in an orderly manner. He alone remained on board, and when about to disembark he was killed by a shell.

The submarine fired three revolver shots in the direction of a dory to arrest it. The six men were taken on board the submarine and the dory was being used to place bombs in the sailing vessel when five English torpedo boats appeared. The submarine compelled the six men to disembark from its deck and submerged at once.

The French sailors were struck by the aspect of

fatigue and nervousness which the Germans displayed. The captain of the submarine kept repeating orders to make haste, and the officer sent to place the bombs had difficulty in carrying on his work by reason of the nervous tension under which he labored. One of the crew of the submarine who had lived a long time in England expressed himself as pessimistic regarding the war, and particularly about the submarine warfare.

It was the same old story, you will perceive, — wickedness brutal and wanton, the mere lust of killing. One schooner raked with a machine gun at point-blank range and the urchin of a cabin boy killed as he scampered on deck to see the submarine! A fishing bark bound home from the Grand Banks, the crew abandoning ship "in an orderly manner" at the summons of the Prussian on his bridge, — all hands in the dories excepting the captain who obeys the unwritten law of the sea in being the last man to quit his deck, — and for this he is blown to pieces by a shell! Pirates of the Spanish Main would have blushed at such a deed. Blackbeard never sank so low. Dirty scoundrel though he was, he shines as a Christian gentleman when compared with a U-boat commander of the Imperial German Navy.

There are very many widows and orphans of French sailors in the ports of Brittany. The Navy has suffered heavy losses among its battalions which were taken from the sea to join the Army at the front. Their women-folk endure their sorrows with

a proud and beautiful courage. The Christmas season was made brighter for them by the thoughtfulness of the American admiral and by the quick response to his suggestion.

This letter was sent to all American ships on the French coast: —

The Commander Patrol Force feels that it would be a privilege on the part of the officers and men of our service if we shared our Christmas with the widows and children of —— to whom this war has brought so many hardships. It is therefore hoped that each ship and the Base may be willing to make a small contribution for the purpose. Such sum as may be subscribed will be given by the Commander Patrol Force to the proper French official for distribution with "A Merry Christmas from the American Navy."

"The Suicide Fleet" turned to with such hearty good-will that several thousand dollars were raised. On one yacht the watch divisions were pitted against each other in a handsome spirit of rivalry and the subscription list averaged eight dollars a man for the ship's company. The total result was most gratifying because there was no large fleet of vessels to call upon. The wives of four French admirals comprised the committee in charge of the distribution, and the official correspondence adds an eloquent little chapter to the record of the intimate alliance now existing between the two republics.

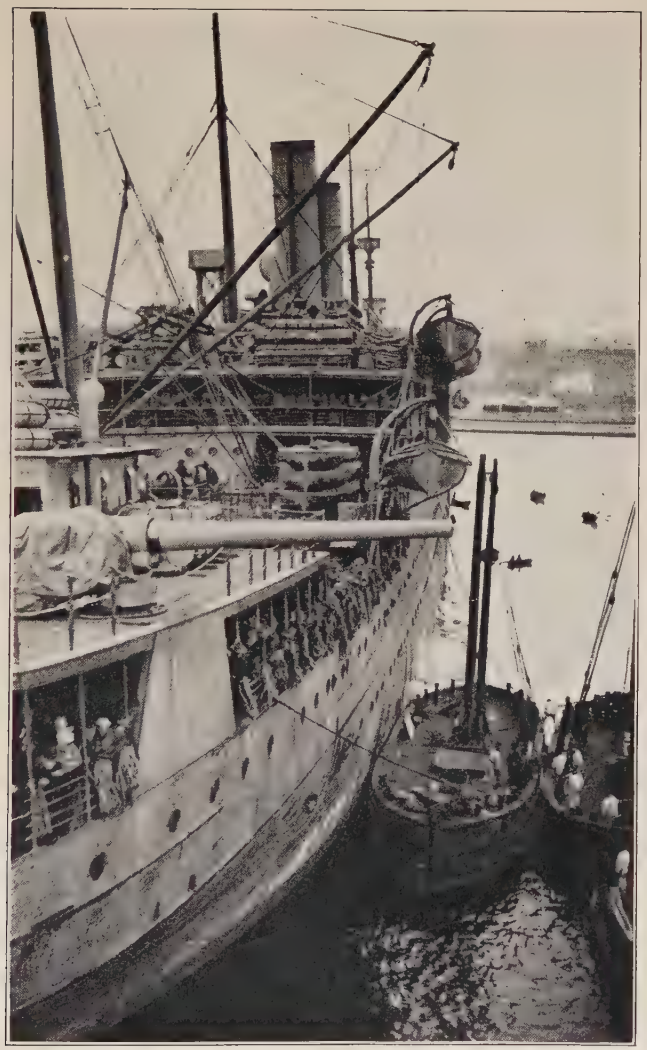
In grateful acknowledgment the wife of the

French vice-admiral commanding the station wrote: —

We would like to be able to have you hear directly the heartfelt thanks of those whom your officers and men are helping with such delicate generosity — they would surely be more adequate than ours. However, we are trying to be faithful interpreters in telling you how grateful are the widows and orphans of the port — so numerous, alas — for the ray of joy brought to their sad firesides by the American Navy.

Thanks to you, this beautiful Christmas season will seem less sad to them. The material comfort afforded them will make them realize also that some one thinks of them and loves them, and that the great nation which comes to them with outstretched arms, so helpful in their need, will also be able to aid them to avenge the brave dead for whom they are weeping. We thank the American Navy for them and for ourselves, for this help and for this hope.

There were reasons other than this ready sympathy why Admiral Wilson endeared himself to the people of the port. His even-tempered sense of justice brought him into close relations with the officials of the local government. They had a grievance and a reasonable one. In the eyes of the French, the American sailors and soldiers received prodigious pay, and they flung their money about with the most careless *abandon*. The thrifty French shopkeepers took advantage of this to raise prices in a manner unheard of. The citizens were compelled to pay these ruinous prices



THE TROOPS REACH FRANCE IN SAFETY

for their food, their clothing, and the burden was more than they could bear.

Now, the economic regulation of this large city seemed outside the jurisdiction of an American admiral, but he was anxious to avoid friction and ill-will, and he therefore invited the mayor to discuss the situation with him. The mayor was a Socialist who held opinions notoriously radical and wasted no love on gentlemen who wore gold lace and epaulets. Suavely the Admiral offered his personal coöperation. It was regrettable that the American forces which had come to aid France should unwittingly cause hardship. The mayor melted. He was the Admiral's friend and partner. Together they would fix prices which should be fair to the people.

It happened, therefore, that you might behold an American naval officer, detailed for this duty, gravely making his morning tour of inspection of markets and shops and restaurants in company with a French gentleman appointed by the mayor. They determined what prices should prevail and so reported to their own headquarters. The Admiral and the mayor having signified their gracious approval, the price list became the order of the day.

The largest hotel of the city was found guilty of extortionate charges. In so far as this flattened the pocket-books of American naval officers, the Admiral considered it his affair. With the approval

of his ally, the mayor, he formally decreed the hotel as "out of bounds" for men wearing the uniform of his own Navy. A bluejacket on sentry duty barred the entrance. This was strictly within the law and the regulations. It was a novel procedure to the French people, however, and newspapers as far away as Paris seriously discussed and cordially endorsed it. Ah, these energetic and resourceful Americans! They took the bull by the horns, or whatever the maxim is in the French language.

The stricken landlord betook himself to naval headquarters and protested that he was utterly broken by this catastrophe. The Admiral was bland but firm. The visitor wrung his hands and depicted his poor servants as starving, himself so soon to be a bankrupt unless the ban was lifted. He was evasive, however, reluctant to bind himself to lower the obnoxious tariff.

One, two, three days, and the sentry still blockaded the hotel entrance. Another pilgrimage by the landlord, now penitent! Yes, he would do precisely what the Admiral wished. A slip of paper pasted on the door of each bedroom, stating the rate per day in francs, the restaurant *carte* to be submitted for revision as often as desired; — and as for respectability! Ah, *Monsieur l'amiral*, no more wine served in the rooms, no feminine guests permitted to enter unless their reputations were like the snow! It would be an honor to feel that

Monsieur l'amiral américaine was in the rôle of a chaperon of the hotel.

"This sounds as if you really intended to be good," quoth the benevolent dictator. "I was perfectly right, you understand, in putting you out of bounds. The lid is declared off and the sentry will be removed. But, mind you —"

In this manner are wrongs righted and causes of misunderstanding removed by the commander of the American naval forces in France. This is important, as one can easily comprehend, in a city whose streets swarm with an amazing variety of fighting men and a parade of all nations. Chinese coolies in blue cotton blouses flit along the pavements and mind their own business as always. Swarthy bluejackets from a Portuguese destroyer sip *apéritifs* in the tiny cafés of the alleys. French sailors wander in the park with their girls, or soberly promenade in groups when the military band plays in the square of a Sunday afternoon. Turbaned Algerians and black Senegalese chatter in front of the shop windows.

A herd of stolid German prisoners of war clump past, to labor at the docks and railroad yards. Whiskered *poilus* in faded blue escort the Boches, seeming to regard them with good-natured contempt. Tommy Atkins twirls his swagger stick and looks on. Nobody knows just why Tommy is here, for no British troops are in this corner of France, but it may be accepted as a maxim that

Mr. Atkins is everywhere, all over the blooming shop.

The American Navy men from the yachts and transports are accustomed to liberty on this foreign shore. It does not go to their heads. Their favorite rendezvous is the Y.M.C.A., where they can eat and loaf and write letters and see the moving pictures. More to their liking, however, is the chance of talking to the fine American women who help carry on the work. The sort of young men who flock from the ships are quick to appreciate the fact that these are ladies in every sense of the word. Navy slang fascinates them, and when the bluejackets ask for postage stamps and fumble for the large French copper pennies to pay for them, you may hear from behind the desks, in accents sweet and refined: "Now, boys, step lively and break out those bunker plates."

It was in a quiet corner of a Y.M.C.A. building that I happened to observe two American sailors, facing each other across a small table. That they were sedately playing checkers was not at all remarkable, but their apparent ages suggested that one might be the grandsire of the other. In a navy where youth must be served, this elderly enlisted man seemed out of place, although he was stalwart of frame and as hard as nails. As for his opponent at checkers, here was a slip of a boy who could not have been in long trousers more than a year or so.

"Sure, we'll take a few dishes of ice-cream with

you, and thank you kindly, sir," said the elderly man. "I never do get filled to the chocks with ice-cream. Maybe it's because I'm shovellin' coal in the bottom of a hell-hole of a destroyer when I go to sea. And your insides get parched, with a temperature of a hundred and thirty degrees when the wind is aft.

"Yes, sir, 't is likely I'm the oldest man that has enlisted in the Navy during the war. And I'm proud of it. Fifty-six years is what I plead guilty to. And how did I get past the recruitin' office? Man, they could n't keep me out, me that has ten children and many of them with children of their own. I worked forty-seven years in the hard-coal mines at Scranton, — forty-seven years in the mines, — from the time I was a breaker boy. Now, what do you think of that? When they needed husky lads in this man's Navy to poke the coal under the boilers, could they keep me out?

"The war kept callin' in my ears. My children said I was an old fool. 'T was time for me to ease up, said they. I told them it was my duty to help beat the brains out of them Germans. What if I was too old to be drafted. Would I side-step it on that account? So I dropped my pick and here I am. And what will you bet? This lad that trims me at checkers is by way of being the youngest man in the Navy."

The youngest man in the Navy wriggled and turned red. As if caught in the act he confessed:

"Old Mike and I are forty-one years apart. I am big for my age and they took me on, — well, I'll have to own up to being fifteen, but please don't give it away."

In this French port the American Army is not so conspicuous as might be imagined. The transports come in very quietly and land the troops at the edge of the city where the railway trains whisk them from sight. Khaki is plentiful in the streets, but it is mostly worn by the negro stevedore regiments which were recruited and organized in South Carolina. They have their own non-commissioned officers and wear the uniform with pride. Their record for behavior has been excellent, and at the hard labor of unloading ships they are both industrious and efficient. The fact that they are enlisted men has made all the difference in the world.

"You can't tell me nothin' about dem letters on a soldier-man's collar," said one of them. "U.S.N.A.? You say hit stan's fo' United States National Army? No, suh. Uncle Sam's Nigger Army — that's what she means to me. Ain't I right?"

These thousands of pilgrims enjoy France with childlike gusto and never-ending wonderment. The ocean voyage was an amazing adventure, to begin with, and it was aptly described by the black stevedore who could not be coaxed on deck after the second day out.

THE FIRST UNITED STATES TROOPS ASHORE IN FRANCE

"You don't git me on top o' dat roof no mo'. I don't like th' looks of dat lake. She's too monst'ous big an' empty to please me. Look like all these yere American ingineer rigiments got to build a bridge 'cross th' big lake before you kin coax us coons back home ag'in."

It puzzled some of them exceedingly to find that the Senegalese troopers and laborers talked French instead of English. There was an amiable attempt to fraternize, but the results were not happy.

"Leave 'em alone," advised a colored American sergeant. "Leave 'em alone. Did n't one man in mah company try to pass th' time o' day with one of these heathen Senegalese? What this wild African done? He done pulled a knife an' he used it mighty brisk. Th' trouble with 'em is that they don't talk no language, man. All they does is make funny noises. Where you suppose they done went to school? I never did 'spect to see niggers so plumb ignorant."

CHAPTER XIII

THE SUBLIME SPIRIT OF DUNKIRK

THE huge British monitors had finished the day's bombardment of Ostend and were steaming back to their base at Dunkirk. Overhead droned the fighting planes which had been "spotting" the ranges for the fifteen-inch guns. They, too, were winging it homeward. The destroyers had been mostly engaged in pouring clouds of black smoke from their funnels to screen the monitors from the heavy batteries of the Boche who had endeavored to make the Belgian coastline impregnable. There were, of course, other occupations for the destroyers during the day. They had scouted against submarine attack and skirted the barrage of nets and mines as the regular inspection patrol.

A destroyer is always busy, appearing to be urged by several different errands at once, very much in the manner of a fox terrior. Her ruling purpose is to crack on speed and go somewhere. For once, however, this flotilla was making a leisurely run of it, as a tired man trudges toward his fireside after work is done. Sunset and dusk were near when we found a mooring-berth among the quays and docks of massive masonry close to the tall lighthouse that guides the mariner into Dun-

kirk in time of peace. The monitors, safely within the harbor channel, plodded in at their own deliberate gait.

Dunkirk, third seaport of France in the extent of its commerce, first in its thrilling associations with centuries past, and now unique in a martyrdom which has been suffered with the most heroic fortitude! Many other cities of France have been ravaged by the war, some of them obliterated, their people exiled or enslaved by the Boche. It is the distinction of Dunkirk that almost for four years it has endured ferocious bombardment from the air, from the land, and from the sea, and yet it lives and carries on its manifold activities.

Because of this Dunkirk was cited in the orders of the Army of France and decorated with the *Croix de Guerre*, bearing the bronze palms. "Heroic city, which serves as an example to the whole nation," read the citation as published in the *Journal Officiel* of October 17, 1917. These words were added to the coat of arms of Dunkirk, which since 1793 had born the legend "Dunkirk has deserved well of *La Patrie*."

It is therefore no new thing for this seaport on the northern coast of France to exemplify the spirit of a nation which Germany has found to be unconquerable. For a thousand years Dunkirk has survived wars and blockades, held now by France or Spain; again by England, which once compelled the destruction of its forts and the ruin

of its harbor because the bold French sailors harried English commerce and swept the Channel with their fast armed luggers.

This was two centuries ago, and now the British Navy is again at Dunkirk, but not with hostile intent. Destroyers under two flags lie side by side, and French trawlers swept the roadstead that the broad-beamed monitors may wallow out to shell the mutual enemy.

It was a British commodore who welcomed me to Dunkirk. His quarters were in a large municipal building on the harbor front, and one climbed several flights of stairs to find him. There he worked and also lived with rigid simplicity — an iron cot in a tiny room, a mess with the officers of his staff.

"I think I shall have to move nearer the ground," said he, looking up from an outspread chart in his operations room. "It will save considerable time. One has to leg it into the cellar, or into his dugout almost every evening when the bombs begin to fall. And then it means climbing the stairs again. The French vice-admiral lives in *his* dugout and has his office there. It's very sensible of him, I'm sure."

"The bombs fall almost every evening?" I echoed. "Is this the sort of a night for them?"

"Splendid!" cried the commodore in his brisk way. He stepped to a window and cocked an eye at the weather. "Oh, they'll be along without fail.

A clear sky and little wind! The Hun will be flying in force. Dunkirk is only ten minutes from his lines, by the air route, so near that his machines can go back and load up again — dump two or three lots of bombs on us in the same night. It's not like one of those piffling London air raids, you know. We really get it."

"Almost every evening?" I reëchoed, intent on the one idea.

"Twenty-seven nights of last September," answered the commodore, and he seemed quite enthusiastic about it. "October ran about the same. That's almost every night, is n't it? The weather began to be thick and stormy in November, and the winter has hampered the sport, naturally. However, this is the best night in weeks. You could n't have hit it more opportunely, upon my word."

"What about getting hit *in*opportunely?" I ventured.

"Oh, people are killed. It can't be helped. The city is badly messed about as you will see for yourself. A corner of this building was taken off recently. Let me see! I have been bombed in Dunkirk one hundred and forty-nine nights. And this will be the one hundred and fiftieth night, — a sort of an anniversary or something, — like a golden wedding, eh?"

The commodore had to excuse himself for a few minutes. German destroyers were reported as

venturing out of Ostend, behind the belt of their own mine-fields. This was one of their dodges, to scurry along the coast and try to throw a few shells into Dunkirk. They would have to be chased in again. Having briefly discussed it with his chief-of-staff, the commodore announced: —

"Now, if you don't mind a simple supper, — war rations, — it does n't seem the proper thing to live in luxury while Dunkirk is carrying on so pluckily. Then you can stroll about until the bombing begins. You will be welcome in my cellar, of course. And it will give us a bit of leisure to talk about things. If you prefer a dugout, one of my officers will be glad to steer you. Some of the latest are very well done — concrete floors, sand-bags, and a sloping roof of boiler-plate. The bombs glance off."

To walk about Dunkirk in the early evening, after darkness came, was to behold a city of gloom and desolation. Not a light shone from window of dwelling or shop. Every ray was carefully screened lest it guide the flight of the Boche overhead. Here and there in the streets a feeble lamp flickered, but it was so shaded as to be invisible from the sky. One blundered into passers-by on the pavements or put out his hand to feel for the walls in the narrower thoroughfares where the obscuration was profound. I had found the nights as black in certain coast towns of England, but there the impression was less melancholy. Their

homes were intact and the people had not been slain by hundreds.

A large city is Dunkirk, spread wide in a low and fertile district amid a network of canals which had fed the port with the prosperous traffic of Belgium and France. It was a mark which the enemy could not miss. If the showers of bombs were aimed at the docks, the railway sheds, or the warehouses, and went wrong, as they usually did, there was the excellent chance of destroying houses with children in them, or a hospital, an asylum, a church. It was in such structures as these that the large losses of life had occurred.

The solid walls of brick and stone had resisted the explosions with extraordinary strength and tenacity. Even at night it was possible to perceive that no part of the city had been completely demolished. House after house was no more than an empty shell, roofless, the windows like eyeless sockets, the ragged walls looming against the sky, but the buildings had not been levelled. They were like the regiments of France which stand firm with ranks shattered.

In the large, open square, the Place de Jean Bart, the starlight perceptibly diminished the gloom. It was not so much like being blindfolded. Buildings centuries old framed the square. It was mellowed and finished long ago, as the quaint gables and jutting façades proclaimed. Hidden were the gaping wounds the bombs had made. An illusion

was created by the merciful night. Dunkirk was herself, unhurt, filled with her happy and industrious people. You could fancy, standing there in the square, that the harbor was filled with ships bound out to the Iceland fisheries, or home from the Argentine with wool, the canals floating the slow-trailing barges away to Lille, Armentières, to the coal basins of Nord and Pas-de-Calais.

Jean Bart! Supreme hero and native son of Dunkirk, but scarcely a patron saint. Men of his stamp are better suited for cannonading than for canonization. The English called him a corsair and a pirate, but they said something of the sort about Captain John Paul Jones. It is true that he held an irregular commission in his youth, but not from choice. Because Jean Bart was the son of a Dunkirk fisherman, he was held to be of low birth and barred from command in the French Navy. There was, however, no keeping a man of his surpassing talent down, and he fought the Dutch and the English so masterfully that France had to make him Admiral Jean Bart.

He died in 1702, the Peace of Ryswick having ended his active service at sea, and Dunkirk knew him again in retirement, a blunt, rough sea-dog whose courage and naval genius were pure gold. A hundred stories of him are still current. He is a legend of France as well as of Dunkirk, her great sailor in a naval history which was later overcast by such misfortunes as the Nile, Trafalgar, and

Quiberon Bay. Ask the children of Dunkirk and they will tell you this favorite tale of their hero: —

Jean Bart desired an audience with His Majesty, Louis XIV, so he went to Versailles in his simple naval uniform with the gold chain about his neck which the king had given him. In the anteroom one of the haughty officials asked: —

"*Monsieur le capitaine de frégate*, have you a letter of introduction?"

"A letter?" exclaimed the visitor. "Why? The king and I are friends. We need no such trifles as letters between us. Tell him it is Jean Bart. That will be enough."

"But you cannot be announced without formal credentials."

"Very well. Why not announce myself?"

Jean Bart advanced to the door of the royal chamber, but a sentry halted him at the threshold.

"Nobody can pass, *mon officier*."

"Is that the order?"

"It is."

"Then I respect the order," cried Jean Bart; and with that he pulled his tobacco pipe from his hat, filled it, struck a steel and lighted it.

The courtiers were astounded. One of them protested: —

"I shall have you understand, *Monsieur le capitaine de frégate*, that smoking is forbidden in the anteroom of His Majesty."

"Then do not oblige me to wait," calmly re-

plied Jean Bart as he puffed at his pipe. "I always smoke when I am compelled to wait."

"But, *mon capitaine*, I must command you to depart."

"Before I see the king?" laughed Jean Bart. "Supposing you try to throw me out."

The courtier went trembling to the king, and said: —

"Sire, in your anteroom is an officer of the Navy, smoking a pipe, who defies us to eject him, who declares that he will enter in spite of us."

"That will be Jean Bart," replied His Majesty.

The official bowed.

"Let him finish his pipe and come in," exclaimed the king.

Jean Bart tossed his pipe into the fireplace and walked into the royal cabinet. Saluting respectfully he requested a pardon for the sailor, Keyser, who had killed a man in a duel. The king hesitated, and Jean Bart told him: —

"Sire, my father, two of my brothers, and twenty other kinsfolk of mine have died in the service of Your Majesty. If you will grant me to-day the life of my sailor, I will give you a receipt in full for the lives of all these others."

The pardon was granted, and Jean Bart went out weeping and shouting at the top of his voice, "Long live the King." The courtiers surrounded him, now eager to pay him homage. They barred

the way. They suffocated Jean Bart. He was unable to escape. One of them asked: —

"How did you manage to get out of the harbor of Dunkirk with your ships, blockaded as you were by the English fleet?"

"Do you really wish to know?"

"Yes, yes!" they cried.

"Well, you will see. I am Jean Bart, am I not? You gentlemen are the English fleet. You are blockading me in the anteroom of the king. You prevent my getting out. *Eh bien! Vli! Vlan! Piff! Paff! Biff! Bang!*"

At each exclamation he gave a kick or a punch to the courtier nearest him and bowled them all heels over head. Having opened a passage to the door he turned and shouted: —

"And *that's* how I smashed the blockade of Dunkirk, my friends."

Here in the centre of the city square was his statue, a bronze figure of heroic size, as was proper, conceived with wonderful spirit and fitness, — Jean Bart, a sailor of the seventeenth century, a great hat with a feather in it, sea-boots, cutlass upraised as though to lead a boarding-party. The bombs of the Boche had not touched him. His very posture, intrepid, energetic, defied them as he had laughed at the Englishmen when he ran alongside them with pikes and carronades.

High above the square, almost three hundred

feet in air, rose the Belfry with its noble peal. It had once been the western tower of the Church of St. Éloi, but for some inscrutable reason a street had been cut through to separate them. The Belfry had not suffered harm from the enemy's attacks, but the Gothic church, large and very beautiful, had been partially shattered by bombs. Loft, columned aisles were heaps of rubbish and the graceful roof was open to the sky.

It was my intention to pay my respects to the Mayor of Dunkirk, Monsieur Terquem, famed even in France where to-day every man is a hero. An officer of the Alpine Chasseurs, the "Blue Devils," the breast of his blue tunic is adorned with the Legion of Honor and the Cross with a palm. When the city received its decoration, he was also cited in the orders of the Army and of the Nation. A signal honor that had been conferred upon no other mayor of France!

It was necessary to ask directions or wander at random in this rayless city. A shaft of light shot from an opened door and was eclipsed, but there was time for a glimpse of the room behind the shuttered front. It was a café, — men seated at small tables, substantial-looking civilians, a uniform or two. The place beckoned. It had lights, companionship. It was a refuge from the intolerable and lonely gloom. Presently we were talking together, a portly merchant of Dunkirk, a French naval lieutenant, a surgeon from the military hospital,

PLACE JEAN BART AND BELFRY, DUNKIRK

the landlord who hopped about on crutches, having left a leg at Verdun.

Yes, they would be delighted to show the way to the house of the mayor, Monsieur Terquem, but unfortunately he was absent for the night, having motored to Calais on an official errand. However, there were interesting things to be said about Dunkirk, if a stranger and an American would care to listen. The portly merchant nodded assent. Dunkirk was not boastful, said he, neither did she request charity. The truth was enough, not a word more. The party composed itself as an audience. Monsieur the merchant was obviously one whose words carried weight. Clasping his hands across his broad waistcoat, he assumed an oratorical manner. His voice was sonorous. There was no affectation. A man genuine and honest whose eyes were sad.

"You will see Dunkirk for yourself — to-morrow, Monsieur," said he. "We live the active life, in the fourth year of the war. The factories are in operation, the shops are open, the harbor is by no means idle. The schools, the public institutions, — all the functions of a city have been maintained. Dunkirk, which has lost its best blood through innumerable wounds, is vigorous. Even in its mourning clothes, it retains all its little coquetries; it does not desire to display its hurts, glorious though they may be; it does not wish to be moved to pity over its own sufferings. This is

not the time for laments. It is always the hour for action.

"An incident or two may illustrate. As soon as 'All Safe' is sounded after a bombardment, — yes, even before that, — firemen and salvage parties rush to the stricken houses. They care for the wounded; they take away those who have been killed; at each end of the street barriers are set up. Rubbish, small beams, broken furniture are carried away; the blood-stains are washed off; the highway repaired, the holes filled up; they work hard to restore as quickly as possible the buildings thus damaged.

"These firemen have been worthy of Dunkirk, Monsieur. Their splendid attitude under incessant bombardment has called forth the praise of a man expert in such matters. Colonel Cordier, who commands the fine regiment of firemen in Paris, was able, as a conclusion to the report he made to the Minister of War, to write these words: 'The service is quite remarkable. Worthy of being held as an example by all the firemen of France.'

"Moreover, these praises have been well deserved. Let us open the Book of Gold of the Dunkirk firemen. Twelve have been named in general orders, and during the attack of the 29th of September five firemen were killed and seven were wounded.

"It is remarkable that under such a hurricane of iron and fire, people can live and work. We should

expect the men to be capable of it, *n'est ce pas?* They deserve no more credit for being here than for mounting guard in the trenches. But is it not admirable that women, young girls, and children, can support it?

"One must regard very highly these women, these young girls, these children, for their quiet and heroic courage. One instance among a thousand, if you please! A few weeks ago a worthy little old woman whose house had been destroyed for the second time by a bomb from an aeroplane, had lost everything, not being able to save from the disaster even a change of clothing. She met Monsieur Terquem who expressed his sorrow, but she stopped him short with an energetic gesture: 'Come, M'sieu le Maire, do not pity me. I am a citizen of Dunkirk and a Frenchwoman. I have suffered for my city and for my native land. I have no regrets. I am ready to make new sacrifices.'

"And the children! They too have not ceased fighting for *La Patrie.* They, so weak as a rule, have toiled with all their hearts and have sought to lighten the sufferings of our soldiers. Our troops were cold during the winter; they made warm garments for them. Our men who were prisoners of war were hungry; the children sacrificed the pleasures which their school prizes would have procured for them, and sent bread.

"Then, all these children have thought of the

men who gave up their lives in defending France and Flanders and lie buried far from their families, far from their friends. The paper flowers which the little ones had made for the decoration of a street in Dunkirk, and had not used because the festival was abandoned, — these flowers they have placed on the tombs where heroes lie. This act they have repeated three times already, but they have done even better than this. Every class in the schools has assumed the responsibility of caring for several of the graves. Each class cultivates its garden in order to obtain flowers for this purpose.

"It will intrigue you, my dear sir, to see the children at the time of a bombardment. Without haste they enter the shelter of the cellars. Some months ago when the German 380-centimetre gun, 'Big Bertha,' sent during the morning forty-seven gigantic shells into Dunkirk, there was a very curious sight in the streets. After each shot the little girls and boys came up from the cellars, and on the steps in front of their doors they jumped rope, played diabolo, and games of war. And when again the siren screeched its warning they disappeared as by enchantment under the earth. How many more illustrations might I cite to show the powerful vitality of Dunkirk!"

The narrator paused and his gaze was abstracted. His fleshy chin sank into his low collar and he sat immobile, brooding. The large, smooth-

shaven face was heavy with care. Of his own losses and sacrifices there was nothing to say. The French naval lieutenant, a much younger man, was home on leave from the Mediterranean, and spoke with a professional air: —

"Here is something more. The nights of bombardment by aeroplanes are distressing. They rack the nerves. There are also other annoyances. Taking advantage of moonless nights, the Boche destroyers used to approach to a point four miles off the Dunkirk coast. It is better regulated at present. Their light draft enabled them to pass over the Gravelines banks and the mine-fields. Then, dashing at full speed, they would fire salvos from their batteries. Before our land batteries could reply to them they would escape as fast as possible. Thanks to the darkness they might also elude the French and English patrol vessels before these could come up. In four minutes as many as three or four hundred shells would be hurled into the city.

" 'Big Bertha'? Ah, my friend, one easily becomes accustomed to the big Boche gun which fires on us from a distance of fourteen miles. On one day of last June, when the weather was clear and beautiful, this cannon opened fire at five o'clock in the morning and ceased at eleven o'clock. It had discharged a shell into Dunkirk every seven minutes.

"One is warned of their arrival. One knows that

between the moment the gun is fired and the instant the shell bursts there is time to get out of the way. One can follow in one's thoughts the course of the projectile. The habit of attention is developed, also somewhat of fatalism. There is a sense of relief in saying, 'Why worry? I shall not die until my hour has come.' You reflect also that there have been hundreds of bombardments and you have not received a scratch. One knows that the warning will be sounded if 'Big Bertha' decides to let her voice be heard again, or if the aeroplanes are coming to drop bombs. There will be plenty of time to seek shelter, to go down into the cellar.

"It was not thus during the first months of the war. Dunkirk lived, so to speak, in perpetual terror. The people felt at ease only when night came and the wind blew from the west. They knew that the frightful Boche birds feared the tempest and would not fly unless conditions were favorable. There was no system of guards and warnings. Now all this is done regularly.

"Watch-towers equipped with sirens have been installed in several parts of the city. They are in communication with other observation points, concealed in our first lines. Night and day men are on the *qui vive*. Their eyes are fixed upon the big 380 gun; its gestures are observed every moment. Is it about to utter its thunderous note? Is the lightning darting from its soul?

"Instantaneously the alarm is given in Dunkirk. The sirens emit two prolonged shrieks which can be heard for twenty kilometres. Ah, the population does not mistake that sound. If at home they descend into their cellars; if outside they seek the nearest shelters. But there is no panic. I might even assure you that there is no haste. One draws his watch from his pocket, knowing that he has one minute and thirty-five seconds to disappear under the protecting earth. This is the time elapsing between the discharge of the gun and the arrival of the shell in Dunkirk.

"If the sirens blow four short, strident shrieks, the people are aware that hostile aeroplanes are approaching. Again they vanish beneath the ground. For some hours they will live the lives of moles. In order to provide the greatest security, the Engineering Corps has built under the cellars real subways which, beneath certain streets, form veritable promenades. In these places of refuge, eight to ten metres deep, one may laugh at the bombs and defy the shells.

"There have been many sad occurrences. One of these aerial bombs fell upon a dwelling. It pierced the three upper stories and burst in the lower floor, which collapsed. Thirty-four persons had sought safety in the cellar. There were thirty-four victims. Not one escaped. Most of these were women and children.

"In order that Dunkirk may not lack anything,

it has been honored also by a visit from a Zeppelin whose bombs killed a few of our people."

The debonair naval lieutenant lighted another cigarette. He spoke with a certain jauntiness, an assumed indifference. It was the uniform, no doubt. He was a man presumably habituated to war and alarms. The company became silent. It required an effort to be light-hearted and loquacious in Dunkirk. One easily became distrait, recalling personal bereavements or material losses. The landlord moved his chair forward. If the American guest desired more information, courtesy demanded that it be freely offered. The affair of Verdun in which he lost his leg and won the bit of ribbon? *Pouf!* Not worth the telling. It was to afflict the listener with *ennui*. But Dunkirk, now! The guest would behold it for himself on the morrow. Quite out of the ordinary. This was indisputable.

"The unspeakable Boches!" cried this crippled soldier of France. He pounded the floor with his crutch. "What liars! Some weeks ago a German official notice proclaimed to the world that Dunkirk had suffered the fate of Rheims and Arras — that the city of Jean Bart was now a mere pile of ruins, a mass of débris. This you will be able to determine with your own eyes, M'sieu.

"You will find streets that are neat and clean, the fronts of buildings washed, show windows well decorated, shops with many customers. You will

meet people walking tranquilly to their business, the men with their heads buried in the newspapers, the women returning from market, their hands laden with baskets. In particular you will be forced to admire the groups of children with book-bags under their arms who walk wisely to school with rather serious looks on their faces. They are neatly dressed, in good health.

"Let us confess it! The life we have led for forty months has been trying. The copious and almost daily showers of shells — they are a serious interference. Those who were not able to withstand the first bombardments left the city. Most of them failed to return. They numbered thousands. It was better to have them go. The others are resolved that they will not desert their city. They consider themselves like soldiers under fire. Indeed, they would no longer regard themselves as Frenchmen and citizens of Dunkirk if they should depart. My own feelings? I will admit it without shame. As a choice of positions, there was less of the sense of uneasiness in the trenches before Verdun."

The wail of a steam siren interrupted. It was imploring, insistent. Almost instantly it was echoed by the whistles of the war-vessels in the harbor. A gun spoke, then another, — the sharp voices of anti-aircraft rifles firing shrapnel.

"It is time to imitate the moles," said the naval lieutenant, with a shrug. "Let us go below decks."

He moved to the street door and opened it for a moment. There was no stir in the darkened city. Two or three searchlights were sweeping the sky with pencilled beams of white radiance. The guns in the suburbs nearest the German lines were furiously busy.

The landlord stumped over to the row of candlesticks on the mantel and gave one to each of the company, striking the matches with a steady hand. This duty despatched, he went to find his wife and babies. The procession filed down a narrow stairway into a low-roofed cellar which was swept and clean, with chairs and table of plank. There were also cots for the drowsy little ones. These came toddling down, three of them, in their night-dresses, rubbing their eyes, but with no signs of surprise. It had happened so often, explained the pretty mother, that the dear lambs thought that all small children divided their slumber hours between bedroom and cellar.

Even in this refuge it was possible to hear the wicked, buzzing noise of the Boche aeroplane engines as they swooped and hovered high overhead. Then came a prolonged, peculiar, whizzing sound — the fall of a bomb through ten thousand feet of space. It struck and exploded, seemingly in the direction of the docks, — a crashing roar and a concussion which was felt in the cellar. It occurred to me to hope that the British commodore had legged it downstairs in time.

Another bomb was dropped, falling somewhat closer to the Square of Jean Bart. Then there came to our ears a different sound, — musical, full-throated, uplifting, — the song of great bells. It was no jangled alarum. The bells were attuned and chiming. They rang out a melody, a chant brave and martial which was flung from the high Belfry tower far and wide over the tormented city. They were vibrant with the spirit of Dunkirk. They were magnificently defiant. Down in the cellar one voice after another began to sing the refrain, in unison with the bells. The portly merchant raised his head and rumbled a basso while the lieutenant carried the tenor. The landlord was beating time with his crutch. The children, sitting up in their cots, piped up in tones sweet and shrill. The great bells were quiet for a moment before swinging into the chorus again, and during the lull the landlord's wife explained, with shining eyes: —

"They are singing it in many cellars. Always it is done. And always in the Belfry, when the Boches come to bombard, the chimes play the 'Hymn of Jean Bart.' "

"An old song — a song which Dunkirk loves," cried the naval officer. "This is why the Boches try so hard to bomb the Belfry — to silence the 'Hymn of Jean Bart.' "

Now it was ringing out again, — mellow, throbbing waves of sound, — the battle hymn of a free people, evoking from the dust of centuries the

traditions and memories of a seaport unafraid. Out there in the Square old Jean Bart himself was listening, the bronze figure in the great hat, the wrinkled sea-boots, the cutlass in his fist. This is the chorus which the bells of Dunkirk were singing to him: —

"Jean Bart, salut! Salut à ta mémoire!
De tes exploits tu remplis l'univers;
Ton seul aspect commandait la victoire,
Et, sans rival, tu règnes sur les mers:
Jusqu'au tombeau, France, mère adorée!
Jaloux et fiers d'imiter sa valeur,
Nous défendrons ta bannière sacrée
Sur l'océan qui fût son champ d'honneur,
Sur l'océan qui fût son champ d'honneur!"

The air raiders passed and came again. They were out in force. For three long hours, with intervals between, they dropped their cruel bombs and the suffering city accepted them with patient fortitude, as a strong man, bound hand and foot, might crouch beneath the blows of a bludgeon. The work of rescue could not wait, however, for the peril to be gone. The bombardment was unusually severe. The bugles of the firemen were already sounding the summons. They were calling for volunteers. It was a citizen's duty to respond. In the cellar of the café there was no disagreement. The French lieutenant jumped to his feet and cried: —

"*C'est la guerre!* It is time to crowd on sail, my comrades!"

In the Square of Jean Bart other citizens were hastening in the direction of the crimson glow of a conflagration. The persistent bombing of the water-front seemed to have shifted to other quarters of the town. It was random, indiscriminate, without method beyond a frantic desire to inflict as much destruction as possible. Where the firemen were assembled two tall dwelling-houses had been smashed by one explosion. The old timbers and woodwork were ablaze and the flames threatened buildings adjacent. The people who lived in the houses had been trapped in the cellars and some of them were still alive. The firemen attacked the débris with furious energy, their brass helmets flickering through the smoke. Volunteers in abundance assisted them. There were shouts of joy when an unconscious woman was dragged forth, then an old man with a broken arm. The spirit of the crowd was superb, but its movements were somewhat confused, lacking direction and a leader accustomed to command the citizens in such an emergency as this.

Ah, he had arrived! It was the mayor, Monsieur Terquem, a captain of the "Blue Devils"! From Calais he had returned in his motor at forty miles an hour, receiving the news over the telephone that this Dunkirk of his was savagely bombed. In a moment he had taken command of the situation, calmly, and every order was obeyed with enthusiastic accord. A man of middle height, thick-set,

still young, his face shrewd and rugged, he appeared to be an ideal soldier of France. Tireless, intelligent, and good-humored, — this was a first impression of him.

When he shouted "*Allons, mes enfants!*" the citizens obeyed as though he had drilled them. In a surprisingly short time the poor wretches in the cellars were extricated, the living and the dead, and the fire was under control. There were other disasters in the town, and Monsieur Terquem hastened from one to the other. It was such a night in Dunkirk as he had very often experienced. Daylight was drawing near when he found respite and was able to go to his own house.

When I called, a few hours later, he was at his desk, alert, smiling, clear-eyed. Madame Terquem entered, a low-voiced woman famed for her courage and charity. She raised a protesting hand. It was not necessary to compliment her. It was merely a matter of duty — a privilege to be of service. The mayor was of a similar mind. He was glad to talk of his city, but not of himself. Mention of the storied past of Dunkirk and its association with the sea touched a responsive chord. He spoke with an ardor that steeled itself against every discouragement.

"Ever since our ancestors of the remote seventh century settled in the midst of the sand hills and built a chapel," said he, "they have unceasingly fought against nature, against men. Duyn-Kercke

— it meant the church on the dunes. Wind, water, the sea, the sand, all were their enemies. When they dug their harbor, the waters rushing to the sea filled it up. Gales blew the sand in and choked it. If they protected themselves against the sea and tried to wrest a little land from its invading billows, it promptly avenged itself by carrying away the dikes and dams.

"And then, when nature had been overcome, when the city acquired wealth and importance, she excited envy and man appeared as an enemy. Three times sacked and burned, six times besieged, fourteen times bombarded, Dunkirk has been a prize of many historical struggles fought out in Europe. To add insult to injury, after the battles had ceased, the Treaty of Utrecht, *a treaty of peace*, decreed the ruin of the city by ordering that the port should be filled up!

"But the citizens of Dunkirk have never lowered their heads. They have always possessed faith in themselves, in the destiny of their city. This is the reason why, at the present time, you will find them carrying on the rôle inherited from their ancestors, ready to be destroyed or sacked for the fourth time, perhaps besieged for the seventh.

"Why, then, should they be moved or show undue emotion at calamities which are their portion? If this war leaves them ruined, they will again set quietly to work, so sure are they of restoring to their beloved city its past wealth and glory.

"Dunkirk has promised herself to be relifted. She has plans for commercial expansion, for civic adornment, for increased usefulness, — plans which were formed before the war. The sad realities of the present cannot cloud these dreams of the future. They will come to pass. It is permissible to say so with absolute confidence. Consider what the city has done under the fire of the enemy, — all her interests maintained with regularity. She has incurred debt, but what does that matter? Dunkirk must live.

"Labor, prosperity, suffering, — this is our history, — and always to live again."

This Monsieur Terquem, a soldier of France, had taught his people to conquer fear, to believe in their souls that death was a little matter so long as their city lived and moved and had its being. It was all true — what the merchant and the naval lieutenant had said in the cellar of the café, what this heroic mayor affirmed without the slightest thought of boasting. The evidence was there to behold with one's eyes and daylight revealed it at every turn. No longer veiled by darkness, Dunkirk displayed her ruins, almost every house scarred with fragments of bomb and shell, every pane of glass broken, desolated buildings in all the streets.

Yes, there were the children flocking to school, those somewhat older taking the courses in book-

DUNKIRK UNDER BOMBARDMENT

keeping, sewing, nursing, stenography, which were offered by the École Pratique de Commerce et d'Industrie. They were building for the future of France. It was this spirit which had organized an exposition of the industries of Dunkirk which was successfully conducted in 1915 during the ordeal of frequent bombardments. A school-teacher was asked how she was able to compel the attention of the children who lived in peril of their lives.

"Ah, there are some whose minds wander," was the reply, "who are not diligent. To these I have only to say, 'Sons and daughters of Jean Bart, are you worthy of the past history of your city, worthy of serving the country in the tremendous drama which is now unfolding?' Will you believe it? These urchins weep, moved by the accents of reproach."

It was these children who, when gas was first used by the Germans, and before the masks were obtainable, made forty thousand gags or pads of cloth which the French troops plastered with mud and tied to their faces. Care is taken to nourish the little ones, to see to it that the babies grow lustily. The public nurseries and clinics have saved the lives of hundreds, and pure milk has been supplied by the city. The poor pay a small amount for such benefactions in order to preserve what Monsieur Terquem calls the "dignity of those of humble means, that dignity which must be the little blue flower of a well-organized society."

Dunkirk had its municipal store of coal when the rest of France was suffering with the intense cold of winter. It was sold at a fixed price and no family had to go without it. During the early months of the war, thousands of refugees streamed into the city from Belgium and the North of France. Not one of them lacked food or shelter. Municipal markets have distributed great stores of potatoes, beans, butter, eggs, meat, with exact justice in the matter of price. There are no profiteers in Dunkirk, nor is there in the whole United States one city so efficiently and unselfishly organized for the common weal in time of war. And this amid conditions which might well seem to have made the place uninhabitable.

So, richly endowed with French naval traditions of the past, Dunkirk is the fitting headquarters of a naval officer who has made his name illustrious in the present conflict, Vice-Admiral Ronarch. It was he who commanded the six thousand French sailors and marines at Antwerp, at Dixmude, on other fields of Belgium during those early weeks of 1914 when the German tide of invasion was but barely stemmed. France honors them greatly, these officers and men who left their ships to fight and die as a forlorn hope. Six thousand of them went in, and two thousand of them came back, but they had said, "*They shall not pass!*" —and the pledge was kept.

Dixmude, now a heap of ruins unutterably sad,

was then like a peasant in holiday garb of pale green with the rivers Yser and Handzaeme tied to her girdle. She was the younger sister of her neighbor Bruges, offering to tired eyes a like prospect of green and leafy surprises along her ancient quays. It was the historic line of the Yser which marked the defence after the fall of Antwerp, when Dixmude was chosen as the objective of the German onslaught and King Albert's Belgian Army was to be brushed aside in the headlong rush to the Channel ports. The Hun did not break through, and no soldiers did more to thwart him than Vice-Admiral Ronarch's *fusiliers marins*, these sailors used to bare feet on rolling decks who tramped the highways in forced marches of thirty kilometres a day.

When the Legion of Honor was bestowed upon the Vice-Admiral, the citation read, "For the bravery, tenacity, and indomitable energy with which he was able to resist the attacks of an enemy far superior in numbers, upon whom he inflicted serious losses and victoriously maintained his own position."

Having done his duty by land, Admiral Ronarch returned to the sea, from his base at Dunkirk directing the operations of the French destroyers, trawlers, mine-sweepers, and other craft which helped to guard the Channel and the Strait of Dover. When I called to pay my respects he was living and working in his sand-bagged and timbered redoubt of a dugout which had been bombed

in vain. The rooms were, of course, very small and gloomy, the partitions of rough boards. The officers of the staff were tucked away in these cubby-holes which contained a desk and a chair. In the poor light of the entrance hall I stood waiting to be escorted into the presence of a personage conspicuous for gold stripes and buttons.

There presently stepped out of the nearest box stall, as you might call it, a short, muscular man in a plain blue coat whose rank was indistinguishable. Gray hair, a gray tuft on the chin, the face of a Breton sailor, seamed and stubborn and brown; a man of the utmost simplicity of habit and manner, he seemed ingenuously pleased that a visitor from America should have cared to seek his acquaintance. The sea sets its own stamp upon those who follow it. Vice-Admiral Ronarch could not have been mistaken for a general, even at Dixmude. Not to apologize, but to explain, he said of the French Navy: —

"Our trawlers, now, — you have seen them for yourself. They have done their share, like the English fishermen of the North Sea. We had many more of the smaller torpedo boats than destroyers, and for this reason the patrol of the French coast in stormy weather has been assisted by the splendid coöperation of the United States. Here in the Channel we do all we can to aid the work of the British Navy. There is no discord — always a mutual respect and sympathy.

VICE-ADMIRAL RONARCH
A Naval Hero of France

COMMANDANT TERQUEM
Mayor of Dunkirk

"It is realized by these Allies of ours that France has found it advisable to save her strength wherever possible. The war has been long and severe. France is still virile and unconquered, but she has suffered. The Navy has gladly sent its men to the trenches whenever they were needed there, as was true in the first part of the war. The naval arsenals have made munitions for the Army. These things are not signs of weakness or exhaustion. It is that England and America have the greater naval resources. They are not fighting the enemy upon their own soil. As the sailors say, 'France has had to claw her way off a lee shore.' "

The Vice-Admiral was a trifle sensitive, you would have perceived, — mindful of certain criticisms that France had not done her full share afloat. He smiled with a shade of wistfulness as he went on to say: —

"Our battle fleet in the Mediterranean has not been given an opportunity to engage the squadrons of the enemy. There were heavy losses in the affair of the Dardanelles, but those big ships of ours were sunk by mines and submarines. It is an unsatisfactory war for the fighting vessels. Otherwise, we have done what we could. Your Admiral Wilson has been kind enough to speak highly of his relations with the French Navy on the coast of Brittany."

CHAPTER XIV

GUARDING THE STRAIT OF DOVER

IN the dead of winter the British destroyers and drifters of the Dover patrol fleet were hanging grimly to their stations off the Belgian coast, endeavoring to catch German submarines and succeeding oftener than was generally supposed. Weather conditions so hampered the monitors that they were seldom able to bombard the enemy's bases. The landsman, ignorant of the prevailing conditions of wind and sea, of the far-flung shallows, of the tortuous channels strewn with mines, of the German coast batteries, demanded to know why Ostend and Zeebrugge were not captured or smashed and why the submarines were permitted to ply in and out.

The Admiralty remained silent, as was its habit, but newspaper opinion became clamorous. It demanded a more aggressive naval policy, younger blood in command. It was a feeling of dissatisfaction similar to that which had removed Jellicoe from the Grand Fleet and put Beatty in his stead. Linked with this issue was the Dover patrol which protected the routes between England and France. This vital thoroughfare had been magnificently safeguarded by Vice-Admiral Sir Reginald Bacon, but he was of the older school of the Brit-

ish naval officer, a man much like Jellicoe, and they were, at length, superseded by the same edict. They had stood together and they fell together.

At the Admiralty Admiral Sir Rosslyn Wemyss was now First Sea Lord, to the command of the Dover patrol went Vice-Admiral Roger Keyes, a combination which promised a dashing offensive at the first reasonable opportunity. A wiry little man was this Admiral Keyes, with the alert pugnacity of a terrier, and it was fair to assume that he would not rest content with putting the troops across the Strait in safety, or with bombarding Ostend and Zeebrugge at long range.

He was the man to dig the submarines out of their holes if it could be done, and to block the holes as well. He was given command in December and had to possess his soul in patience until spring brought favorable weather. The plans for an attack were, of necessity, complex, delicate, and difficult to perfect, while even the most successful execution was bound to be a series of hazards of the most desperate nature. In short, what Admiral Keyes proposed to do, with the approval of the Admiralty, had been considered impossible by many influential officers of the Royal Navy.

Vice-Admiral Bacon, his predecessor, had so concluded, although his own strategy against the submarines and their bases on the Belgian coast had been adroit and ingenious. It so happened that I was with the ships of the Dover patrol when

this change of command was ordered, on the day that Admiral Jellicoe ceased to be the First Sea Lord. Admiral Bacon had been summoned to London and returned with the news of his retirement. It came almost without warning, but if this splendid English sailor was deeply moved he gave no sign. He was a robust, masterful man for his years, a profound student and technical expert.

Mindful of the courtesies which this situation demanded, he crossed to Dunkirk in a destroyer to bid farewell to the British commodore and his staff, to the French vice-admiral, to the captains of the ships in port. He was regarded with the greatest esteem and affection by those who had served with him. Having finished this final errand of duty, which must have been painful, he returned by automobile along the coast to Calais and thence over the Strait of Dover in a swift destroyer which required no more than forty minutes for the passage from France to England. He was kind enough to invite me to make this journey with him, and we sat in the darkened little chart-room of the destroyer, wrapped in rugs, while there passed like shadows the supply ships and the transports whose unbroken processions, for three and a half years, had maintained millions of British troops in France.

He talked of his work and its problems without resentment. It was for another man to show whether he could do better. After all, there was

BRITISH DESTROYERS PATROLLING THE NORTH SEA ON THE LOOKOUT FOR SUBMARINES

A BRITISH TRAWLER WITH BOW BLOWN OFF BY A MINE

the test, as it appeared to him, — five million men ferried in and out of the ports which he had guarded during the war, these hundreds and hundreds of laden ships weaving in and out by night and day, safe from German attack. Two powerful submarine and destroyer bases from which the enemy operated within an hour's steaming of the Channel routes, and they were powerless to molest this tremendous tide of traffic!

What is the British Navy doing? Here was one answer to the question. It has kept British armies at the front and protected them at sea, not merely by stringing nets across the Channel as is popularly supposed, but also by means of an unceasing patrol of fleets of ships. During the winter months I crossed the Dover Strait and the Channel six times in British destroyers and transports and always in stormy weather. It was never too rough for the vessels of the patrol to be sighted — sea power dominant and unbreakable. Germany had built her mighty High Sea Fleet for one purpose, to isolate England and destroy her maritime commerce.

Five million men moved in and out of these English ports of the Dover Strait and almost under the guns of German bases! What this British vice-admiral and his ships had achieved was an argument to baffle the thunderous eloquence of Admiral Von Tirpitz, he of the ruthless threats and the studding-sail whiskers!

And so another commander came to the Dover patrol — but the months went by and the man in the street grew impatient. "The silent service" did its daily tasks. Then, one April morning, the world was thrilled with the tidings of a night attack on Zeebrugge — such a story as awakened memories of Hawke and Drake, of Rodney and Nelson. There had been many other naval deeds in this war which were as brave and reckless but they were not so spectacular, so wildly melodramatic as this landing of the British Marines on the Mole of Zeebrugge, the sinking of the old cruisers filled with concrete to block the channel, the dogged heroism of the Vindictive, the Daffodil, and their consorts while the German guns shot them to pieces in the glare of searchlights.

Commanders who died while leading their men, wounded sailors who cheered their comrades on, destroyers, drifters, submarines sticking to it in a hell of fire, — it was the British Navy in action. But this is not the only brilliant episode of the Dover patrol, although it is the most conspicuous. What might be called a naval classic of the war was the great fight of the British destroyers, Swift and Broke, so brilliant and desperate that it also lived up to the best traditions of the service.

Captain E. R. G. Evans, of the Broke, has many friends in the United States where he lectured as a survivor of the Scott expedition to the South Pole. It was because of this acquaintance, as well

as the distinction he had won, that Captain Evans was selected to welcome the first division of our destroyers in behalf of the British Navy when they steamed into an Irish harbor.

After his action in the Broke he was promoted and made chief-of-staff to Vice-Admiral Bacon of the Dover patrol. Those who listened to his story of Antarctic adventure will pleasantly recall a very attractive personality — the demeanor of a modest gentleman and the candid simplicity of a sailor. A young man, too, — of the proper age to have crowded an epic of bold achievement into a few years. We were together in a British destroyer bound out on special duty when he was persuaded to tell what had befallen him in this war-swept lane of water that rolls between England and France.

"The Germans were keeping fifteen modern destroyers at their Belgian coast bases for the tip-and-run raids, but we were never able to bring them to close action until April of last year (1917). The Swift and the Broke encountered the enemy in Dover Strait and nothing could have suited us better, although in numbers and armament we were hopelessly outmatched. The action was fought on a dark night, and there was something doing every minute, as you say.

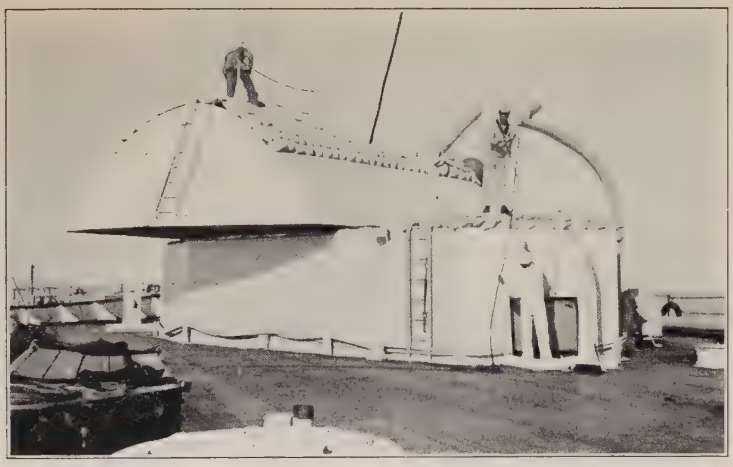
"In the midst of the show it was n't easy to find out what the Swift actually did because she first drove straight for the enemy. Every time

her six-inch gun was fired, the flash blinded those on the bridge, and but for this she would have rammed a German destroyer. Running down the line, she turned as the last boat passed her and then followed with her splendid speed, delivering punishing hits. A shell unluckily tore a hole in her and compelled her to reduce speed, with four feet of water above her mess decks.

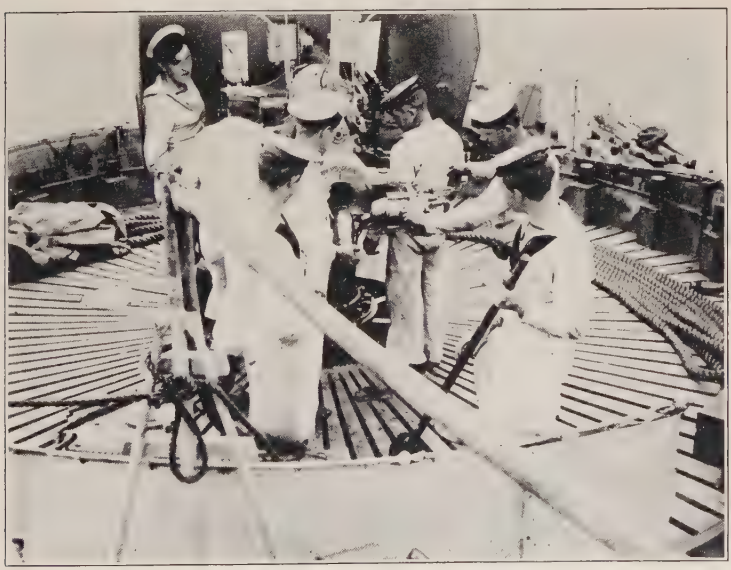
"Six German destroyers had come out of Zeebrugge for this raid and only two got back. The Swift chased these, but she was a lame duck and so turned to finish off the destroyers already sinking.

"My ship, the Broke, had a fine view of the whole performance, with her lofty bridge protected by splinter mats. Besides the battery we had twenty-five rifles loaded, with bayonets fixed, two pom-poms, two maxims, cutlasses ready on the upper deck, and revolvers for the officers.

"We proceeded at full speed slap into the lot, opening with all the guns that would bear, and letting go a torpedo as the Broke swung in toward the nearest target. The torpedo struck amidships and one of the Germans was accounted for, drifting away in a mass of flames. Putting helm hard aport we veered to bear down on number three in the enemy's line. On the bridge one felt a thrill of hopeful expectancy, and then with a cheer the Broke crashed into the German G. 42, abreast her after funnel. The shock was not severe on our bridge, but the engine-room gang thought we had



BRITISH SAILORS ON A MONITOR AFTER THE FIRING OF THE FIRST ROUND



A GUN CREW OF H.M.S. SWIFT

been torpedoed. They kept the ship going at full speed, however, and the two vessels locked together, turning in the same direction. The German was probably going at twenty-five knots herself when we rammed her.

"The impact was so great that one of her torpedo tubes went through our side, was wrenched from its mountings, and left sticking in the Broke. Many of the Germans climbed over our bows by means of the stockless anchors which hung from the hawse-pipes. They may have had some hopes of carrying the Broke by storm, as they were ordered to do, but as a boarding-party the attempt failed. Seven of them were bayoneted by our sailors and thrust back into the sea. Unfortunately I had forgotten to tell my men that they should fire a round after using the bayonet in order to free their rifles. Therefore when they spitted their Germans they were forced to let go and we lost seven good rifles with Germans attached.

"One of these men was killed in a scrimmage on our upper deck and two others lay down, feigning death. These were kicked into a hatch as prisoners. The German destroyer was ripped right open and soon her stern sank so deep that the Broke steamed right over her without damage to herself. During the short time the ships were locked together a perfect hail of machine-gun fire was poured at the Germans visible on deck.

"During this affair one of the other enemy de-

stroyers, passing down our starboard side, fired a shell which hit a box of cordite. This was tossed high in air and fell upon our bridge where the cordite was scattered about and took fire. The bright flame so lighted us up that we were a fine target and suffered accordingly. The Broke had fifty-seven casualties, including twenty-one men killed. When we twisted clear of G. 42, which was riddled and sunk, there remained one German destroyer ahead of us and one to starboard. I tried to ram the ship ahead, but missed because of our loss of speed due to an explosion in one of our boiler-rooms.

"The other German fired a torpedo at us which passed close astern, but at the same time our torpedo gunner let drive from an after tube and scored a hit somewhere forward. This appeared to have finished the German ship which had been already mauled by the Swift. We now tried to chase the two remaining destroyers which had turned tail for the coast. The night was very dark, but they were anxious to get away and flames were shooting up from their funnels.

"My second engineer informed me that the loss of feed water was so great that he could not steam at more than half-speed, so we had to turn back toward two sinking destroyers which might require final attention. The Broke passed through great numbers of German sailors swimming in the sea. Their life-saving waistcoats had some

sort of calcium lighting device so that the sea was covered with uncanny little flickers. They twinkled and blinked like fairy lights on the elves of a Christmas pantomime.

"The unfortunate castaways were crying, 'Save us!' 'Save us!' but the action was not yet finished, and I could not wait to pick them up at this moment. Our sailors were shouting at them, 'Swim, you beggars, until we come back for you! It will do you good! That's what you did to the people in the hospital ships you torpedoed!'

"We had more important work in hand than to rescue midnight bathers who were comfortably bobbing about in their life-jackets. Closing in on one of the sinking destroyers, I saw that her upper decks were on fire and that she had a big hole under the fo'castle through which yellow flames could be seen. Some men on board were crying, 'We surrender!' I shouted at them through a megaphone, 'We will take you off!'

"This was spoiled by one of their gunners who fired a four-inch shell which passed just over our heads on the bridge of the Broke. We therefore gave it to her in the neck with four rounds of our own four-inch. Our sub-lieutenant, as soon as he saw the sinking German ship open fire after surrendering, hit her with a torpedo at two hundred yards' range.

"We were drifting down on her and my ship would no longer steer. The navigator suggested

that the German destroyer's magazines might explode before she sank and blow us up with her. The engine-room managed to get a little steam on and we went slowly astern and stopped. H.M.S. Mentor now arrived from Dover and passed us a hawser. The Swift was still in the game, investigating an abandoned destroyer which seemed to be G. 42, the one I had rammed. Her crew had jumped into the boats and could be seen in the glare of the searchlights, pulling frantically toward the British vessels.

"From these and the other survivors we learned that six German destroyers had come out from Zeebrugge. Three of them had been sunk, so these sailors affirmed, by a 'colossal naval force, almost simultaneously.' It was their impression that they had been attacked by seven British cruisers. They were indignant that we should have charged right down the line, and said it was most unlooked-for and gave them no chance to torpedo us.

"The Broke had been swept by shells. It is interesting to discover what a terrific amount of pounding a large destroyer can stand, and yet be able to stay afloat. Shells had passed through her fo'castle, bridge, boiler-room, killing gun crews in their tracks, smashing steam-pipes, all electric connections and voice-pipes, carrying away the masts. The funnels were riddled. One shell had swept the lower bridge almost clean, killing the signalman, quartermaster, and telegraph-man.

"It was a very gratifying action and we were all glad to be there," was the final verdict of Captain Evans of H.M.S. Broke.

The little steam drifters were not so well able to take care of themselves as the dashing destroyers when the German forces stole out, under cover of darkness, to harry the Belgian coast patrol. The initial advantage was with the enemy. One of these raids is a sortie on a night chosen for inky blackness, — fingers closed around the firing-key of every gun and torpedo tube, — every surface craft a target to be fired on at sight while moving at top speed. With no strategic purpose, the German destroyers run amuck, on the blind chance of sinking something.

The British drifters, armed with one gun, must hover in the shallow water off the hostile coast, for they have errands of their own. Their crews of fishermen patrol for submarines, and likewise watch their nets. These are stranger nets than trawler or drifter ever set in time of peace, designed to catch far bigger, uglier fish than ever swam on the North Sea banks. The drifters fill their holds with them, with miles of steel wire mesh, to be laid off the Belgian coast and across the tide of the Strait of Dover.

Hollow glass balls buoy them up, and along the bottom of the net are small mines, fastened every so often, tidy little mines of the size and shape of a waste-paper basket. The submarine that noses

into a net has small chance of cutting through it before two or three of these neat, very quick-tempered mines bang against her sides, and there is a destructive explosion. At least one German submarine will not try again to pass down the Channel as the shortest route to the open sea.

A five-knot tide scours to and fro in this Strait of Dover, and the gales of winter lash it without mercy. Nets and buoys are bound to go astray from their anchorages, merchant steamers blunder into them in thick weather, and the Hun is always poking about to find a convenient opening. This is the part the drifters play in the task of maintaining the Dover barrage, working hand in hand with the destroyers to guard the vital routes between England and France. It was on a cloudy night of February that seven of these little drifters were surprised and wiped out by a raiding force from a Belgian base. I had known these valiant ships and men while at sea with the patrol vessels, and it was possible to realize how the disaster had occurred, and why the British destroyers came too late to avert it.

One of these doomed drifters had sighted a German submarine on the surface and perceived that it was attempting to break through the vigilant cordon. Off went the drifter in jubilant pursuit, signalling her consorts to join the hunt. They trailed after like a pack of beagles, and the German destroyers, blundering about in the darkness,

BRITISH DRIFTERS AT SEA

A DRIFTER CARRYING THE MAILS

saw the signal rocket and dashed down upon the drifters which were intent upon their own affair with the submarine.

The German craft were operating in pairs. One of the two would switch on a searchlight for a few seconds necessary to find the range and then the whole flotilla slackened speed to carry out the deliberate destruction of the drifters. One of the few survivors said of the carnage: —

"It was awfu' — juist a mad slaughter. Girt ole black deevils — they came ravin' amongst us."

He shook his grizzled head and the gold earrings twinkled in his ears. His utterance was without heat or reproach. He was a fisherman from the North Sea, wont to accept both calamity and good fortune without emotion.

The Germans closed to within fifty yards of their victims, which had no chance to fight back — small, slow steamers with one pop-gun and a dozen men. Pouring salvos of shell into the gutted hulks the Hun passed on and turned again. It was like shooting into a pigeon-house with a shot-gun poked through the door. In one instance a destroyer ran so close to a drifter that the guns could not be depressed to rake her, so the gunners fired on the downward roll as the sea lifted the ship and the little Cloverbank was a wreck in an instant, a horrid shambles of escaping steam, showering sparks, men torn to pieces.

Only one man of the crew survived this first salvo. He was a deckhand of the Trawler Naval Reserve. Through the flames and fumes he staggered forward to reach the drifter's gun. Point-blank he fired it, blinded, stupefied, single-handed, the only living man, — fighting with the instinctive courage of a British bull-dog. The sea around him was covered with blazing, sinking drifters which were meeting it every bit as gallantly. The men left alive were launching their splintered boats and paddling clear, taking their wounded with them. The two engineers of the Violet May, finding all their mates dead or mangled, put the dinghy into the water, lowered into it the mate who was mortally wounded, and a helpless deckhand. The others were buried in the burning wreckage.

This dinghy drifted about, waited until the enemy had vanished, and then returned to the shattered Violet May, which still floated. Ammunition was exploding on her decks, she was burning fiercely forward, and steam was pouring from the midship hold.

"A doot she's sinkin'!" stoutly exclaimed one of the engineers.

The other said nothing, being sparing of his speech, but he made the dinghy fast and climbed on board again. Between them, this indomitable pair of Scots fought and overcame the fire. The dying mate had been left in the dinghy and he piteously cried after them: —

"Dinna leave me in the little boat."

"Na, na," was the reply, "we'll no leave ye."

And so presently they hoisted their wounded back on board and carried them below. The mate was laid in his own bunk, and one of the engineers rummaged in the locker and found some shirts which he tore into bandages.

"An' them the mate's best shirts," sorrowfully murmured the other Scot.

"It's nae guid, lads," whispered the mate of the Violet May. "Dinna fash aboot me. A'll gang nae mair on patrol."

Thus he died, but the two engineers saved their little drifter which was towed to a haven at the base port, where she lay a mass of charred wood and twisted metal to show what fishermen could do in war. Sixty good men and true in this shattered fleet had given up their lives in order that the Strait might be kept clear.

The destroyers have never lacked a variety of interests between these neighboring shores, and boredom is infrequent. A transport laden with two thousand tons of trenching material lost her course and ran ashore on the Belgian coast between Nieuport and La Pan, so close to the battle-lines that she was under the guns of the German heavy batteries, which opened fire as soon as daylight disclosed the ship's position. Now this cargo was needed by the army in Flanders, but the officers and crew took to the boats and sought the

safety of the open sea. The British commodore at Dunkirk promptly steamed out, taking two tugs with him and a destroyer to annoy the enemy.

The enemy was more than annoying. Besides the shells which menaced the stranded transport, the German seaplanes flew out, and showered bombs from the air.

"By Jove, they bombed us all over the place," said the commander of the destroyer, with an injured air. "The master of the larger tug of the two got cold feet and dodged around a mile away, where his boat was perfectly useless. The little tug was much more sporting, but it had n't the power to do much at the end of a hawser. The commodore was losing his temper, and he was a most sweet-natured man as a rule. Finally I poked alongside with my destroyer and we lashed the three vessels together, my boat, the transport, and the sporty little tug. Somebody counted the bombs while we were at this stunt and twenty-four of 'em spilled all about us.

"We all pulled and thrashed about like billy-be-damned, and the good ship slid off the sand, and away we went for Dunkirk, proud as peacocks. The big tug followed, sulky and furious, and what do you think her skipper did? The cheeky beggar put in a claim for salvage. The commodore enlightened him, most emphatically."

Two can play at the bombing game, and in the Dover Strait the English "blimps" take a hand

at it, those small dirigibles which gleam high overhead like silvered sausages. They are useful on the submarine patrol when the weather is fair and clear, and during the long summer days they cruise for a dozen hours at a stretch, drifting above the shipping lanes. Their mishaps are often entertaining, with a spice of humor, for their crews do not take the "blimps" too seriously. It was in one of the lofty sheds which shelter them from the Channel gales that a boyish pilot with a twinkling eye was moved to yarn to me as follows:—

"Don't rag him about it at dinner, please, for he's a sensitive creature and blushes quite easily. His blimp made a bad landing, do you see, and he popped down right on top of a farmer's cottage. The envelope busted and spread out and this blinking balloon draped itself over the roof and hung down in front of the upper windows. The cottage was properly covered up.

"This poor shrimp of a pilot crawls out of his car and digs his toes into the roof, and manages to poke his head out from under the billowing folds of the envelope. For lack of a ladder he ties an end of his anchor rope around the chimney and slides over the edge of the roof until he bumps a window ledge. Then he crawls into the window, of course.

"The farmer's buxom daughter had been dressing and these strange sounds on the roof rather interfered, — well — er — her toilet was unfinished. She ran to the window just as this castaway from

the busted blimp was inserting himself into the bedroom window. Tableau!

"The buxom lass screamed and fled for the stairs. The horrid intruder bolted after, not with wicked intent, but merely to find an exit. Out into the garden she flew, still hotly pursued by the villain from the skies. He was about to double for the highway when the farmer and one of his laborers rushed to the rescue of imperilled innocence. They brandished pitchforks or mattocks or something and were infernally fast on their feet, to hear our young friend tell it. At any rate, he ran some two miles with his throttle wide open before he began to draw away and could reasonably hope to live.

"It was a shocking scandal, to besmirch our pure young blimp station in this manner, was n't it? This pilot had been a decent sort until then, but climbing into young women's bedrooms and all that — he knows what we think of him!

"Oh, that reminds me, — this was really amusing. A dashing Italian officer came to visit us, an aviator of sorts, but he had never been up in an airship. He omitted to mention this fact when he made his first flight in one of our blimps. The game is different from aeroplanes as he discovered. He went up all right, but came down too hard. The bump spilled the rest of the crew out, and the blimp promptly bounced him four thousand feet up in the air, with all this weight out of the car.

"The engine had stopped when the bold Italian hit the earth. He knew enough to valve the gas, but he could n't let out enough to bring her down, and at four thousand feet she was still soaring nearer heaven. He had pluck and it made you dizzy to watch the performance. Climbing out of the car, he made his way among the stays and wires and hung on by his toes while he cranked the propeller. The engine refused to start. Then he had to scramble back and valve more gas. He kept it up for half an hour, I give you my word, dancing on nothing, whirling the propeller and popping back into the car. Then the engine got going and he steered for the good old earth. What he said about blimps when we towed him into the shed was in Italian, very choice and inflammable. We were afraid a spark from it might fire the gas, so we steered him into the mess-room and quenched him with whiskies-and-sodas."

To this same mess-room for dinner came two flying men of the Royal Naval Air Service who belonged to fighting squadrons of aeroplanes which attacked the Huns over their own lines on the Belgian coast. They affected a scorn for blimps and talked a strange jargon which defied translation. Snatches of their professional dialogue sounded something like this: —

"I'm still on the same game, old thing, — sops, two-seaters, and camels. We've got an old tinside, too, for joy-riding; but it's a wash-out."

"Have you butted up against Jones-Needham?"

"Yes, he crashed a few days ago, — on his first solo flip, — taking off, — tried to zoom, engine konked, — side-slip, — nose-dive. Not hurt, though. Where's Seymour?"

"Oh, he tried spads, but got his wind up. What about your new machine?"

"It's a dud bus. Too much stagger and prop stops on a spin. See you to-morrow. I'm flopping at dawn."

CHAPTER XV

WHEN THE BATTLESHIPS MOVE OUT

IN April it ceased to be a secret, carefully guarded among naval men and journalists who knew, that battleships from the American Fleet were operating in British waters under the direction of Admiral Sir David Beatty, commander-in-chief. Just what ships these were and to what duties they had been assigned was information which the enemy was not presumed to know with certainty. At any rate, it was better to put the inquisitive German to the trouble of finding it out for himself. British naval officers were impatiently hoping for permission to make the news public. It was a gloomy winter in London; not so much discouragement as the realization that the collapse of the Russian military power had made a finish of the war seem far remote. France and England would hold fast until the last regiments died in their tracks, but they gazed across the sea and waited for America to put its back into the conflict.

"It would thrill England," said one of her admirals, "to know that your big ships are in the war-zone. That is the sort of thing that appeals to the popular imagination. You have no idea how it would buck them up. Why, when I first heard it, I rushed around among my friends in the service

and passed them the word. Not but what the Grand Fleet can trounce the German Navy without any help, but it's the idea of the thing. Splendid! It's all hands together, destroyers, battleships, and the rest of the show."

When I was living aboard one of these big fighting ships of the United States Navy, as the guest of Rear-Admiral Hugh Rodman, they were held ready to go to sea at the briefest possible steaming notice, and they frequently went. Like the powerful divisions of the British Grand Fleet, their one purpose was to engage the enemy, and nothing was more amusing to the officers and men than that battleships were afraid to move out and risk submarine attack. They were boldly cruising at sea and far from their base whenever there was the slenderest hope that the German heavy ships might have moved out from behind the shelter of minefields and coast defenses.

There is a notion, rather widespread, that the Grand Fleet has merely watched and waited inactive ever since the battle of Jutland, contenting itself with a checkmate, its duty done so long as the Imperial German Navy is blockaded from the high seas. This is not the temper of the man who rules this mighty assemblage of naval force from the deck of his flagship. It is quite out of character to imagine Admiral Beatty as sitting idly and twiddling his thumbs while he waits for something to happen. When the great opportunity offered itself,

he held the German Fleet with his battle cruisers until the English battle divisions could come up and pound the foe to pieces. Darkness prevented, or Admiral Jellicoe was a shade too cautious, whichever side of the argument you prefer, and the greatest sea fight ever fought was inconclusive.

Given another opportunity and Beatty is likely to hammer out a decision without counting the cost. He never has counted it, and this quality, rather dashing than reckless, stands out in one's first impressions of him. Jaunty, intrepid, the brass-bound cap always slightly over one eye, he has a phrase which aptly sums up the naval strategy of England in this war. When asked whether he expects the German Fleet to attempt another sortie, he will probably reply with a smile: —

"We're here, — what, what?"

The American battleships, eager for active service and reluctant to be held in reserve, were given the position of honor whenever they manœuvred with British divisions at sea or cruised in search of the enemy. This indicates how highly they were regarded by Admiral Beatty. It was no empty compliment. Efficiency was the only test. For their own part, the officers and men of the ships that flew the Stars and Stripes were soon satisfied that Beatty was a proper man to follow into action. He was ready to set the pace for an American Navy which has its high traditions of an aggressive offense. It was gratifying that the

Secretary of the Navy could receive such reports as this: —

"The English command has the highest respect for the proficiency of the American ships and for the personnel which is regarded as modest, eager to play its part, and well up in its business. The American Admiral enjoys the most cordial relations with the British forces and finds the exchange of ideas and practice most valuable."

It was no small task to send these ships across the sea and keep them fit, by night and day, for emergency orders. They made the passage in the winter, beset by gales of extraordinary violence which smashed boats and deck hamper and flooded the living quarters. Things were put to rights, the crews made their own repairs, and the ships reported for immediate service, as the destroyer divisions had done when they steamed into their Irish harbor.

These vast and complicated structures, filled with men, from twelve to fifteen hundred in a ship, had to adjust themselves to novel conditions and an unfamiliar routine.

At home it had seemed almost impossible that battleships could be kept ready to dash to sea at from two to four hours' notice through month after month, independent of navy yards and docks, but when it had to be done the American Navy did it without grumbling. The work was hard, the strain incessant, but the British Fleet had endured it for

FORECASTLE OF A BRITISH BATTLESHIP, THE MEN WEARING THE SUMMER KIT

IN THE BOILER-ROOM OF A BRITISH BATTLESHIP

three years and more and showed almost no symptoms of staleness or war-weariness.

If John Bull could take his medicine in this fashion, then Uncle Sam proposed to grin while he swallowed his dose of it. And to lighten the load, there was always the bright hope of a fight, not in chase of tin sardines of submarines, but with the turret guns against a German fleet which was said to shoot most infernally straight. These American ships had gunnery records of their own. Nothing would delight them more than a chance to show what they could do.

I was lucky enough to be on board of the American flagship when the Fleet moved out. It was not a practice cruise, but a night alarm, the real thing. A memorable experience, this, — but immensely difficult to describe with any satisfaction because of the reasonable restrictions of a naval censorship. I trust, however, that it is permitted to say that the earnest anticipation of every man of thousands was to cut the German High Sea Fleet off from its base on the other side of the North Sea and so compel a battle of big ships.

The signal came long after the decks had piped down for the night and the watches below were slumbering in their hammocks. Many of these men were undisturbed until later. There was almost no stir within these crowded steel walls, orders spoken here and there, groups of men moving alertly toward their particular business. They were as boyish

as the lads of the yachts or destroyers, but the Navy had already made them its own. The message passed from lip to lip and was repeated in low tones.

"Under way at three o'clock — the whole works, Bill. Get that? Do you think we'll get a crack at those Dutch burglars this time?"

"You never can tell. This is n't the first hurry-call. The same old story, maybe. But if there's anything doing, we'll be there, old-timer. Say, if the folks at home could see us now!"

"Well, sometimes I think I'd rather be in jail than cooped up here at the jumping-off place with nowhere to go, but you can't get real sore on it as long as we go surgin' out like this every now and then."

"It's a busy bunch of packets all right. These old battle-wagons sure do roll up mileage in a month."

At two o'clock in the morning I drifted into the Admiral's quarters and found him sitting at his desk, a burly figure in hooded waterproof clothes. He looked like a deep-water sailor, complexion burned brick-red by incessant winter gales, a face broad, jovial, massive, while his voice rolled strong and resonant from a chest as thick as a barrel. He was drinking coffee, smoking hot, and appeared to have nothing else to do. To play the part, as a landsman might fancy it, he should have been pacing the floor, hands locked behind him, frowningly absorbed in his weighty responsibilities.

His work had been done. The ships were prepared to move, to go into action. This was why he sat at the desk and awaited the word to climb to the bridge. There was his yarn of the sacred calabash which had been left unfinished at dinner — he proceeded to finish it now, reeling off this wondrous tale of the South Seas with the racy gusto of a man who had the gift of narrative.

The captain of the flagship came in to report. He, too, was in a genial mood with no anxieties to parade. As he went out, the young executive officer met him in a passageway and answered a brief question. There seemed to be no reason for prolonged discussion or instructions. One of the battleships had joined the others only four days earlier than this, having come straight from her American port. Her captain signalled that he was ready to sail with the Fleet.

As the moment of departure from harbor drew near the blinker lights flashed from scores of British ships. The darkness sparkled with these final messages. Then the bare hillsides roundabout reechoed to the harsh clank of chain cables as the anchors lifted. After that the black night and silence, and great ships stealing slowly toward the headlands and the fairway to the sea. Most of them were invisible, for the sky was densely overcast and the freshening wind brought gusts of rain. They passed out as though feeling their way with a blind man's sense of perception, so many hundred

yards apart, steering close to rock-bound islands whose merest touch would have ripped a battleship's hull.

Now the big ships do not move alone. They are escorted as befits their stately rank and station, and with them go the flocks of destroyers, the submarines, the cruisers, and other craft that screen, scout, and protect the mighty squadrons. All these, too, were under way at the stroke of the hour, as if a master mind had pressed a key that animated them as one. They fled on their appointed courses without confusion, unerringly, separate parts of one enormous mechanism harmonious and synchronized. To navigate this fleet through the cramped roadstead in broad daylight would have been considered a handsome feat in time of peace. In war they did it at night as a matter of course.

Whither they were bound and why — this was known only to their admirals and captains. This trained obedience, the flawless coördination of these many thousand men at the prompting of a few words, was profoundly impressive. The Fleet had a soul and a purpose. It was human, not so many masses of floating steel, but it had the tenacity of tested metal. This midnight alarm was no more than an incident in the routine which the British ships had maintained ever since that fateful day of August, 1914, when they vanished with sealed orders. Their inflexible vigil had been kept in lonely waters far to the north, through oppres-

sive winter darkness, where the rough winds seldom cease and the bleak shores are forlornly inhospitable. And because they were there, whether at anchor or in restless quest of the enemy, the argosies of merchant vessels under many flags were able to steam in safety over oceans ten thousand miles distant. The rich Atlantic ports of the United States were guarded against attack by this tireless, unconquerable fleet, and their millions of people went about their business or made ready for war behind the guns of British battleships.

It was the courteous thing to do by way of a small return — to send American fighting ships across the sea as soon as it was learned that they could be used to advantage. The specific reason for their employment has not been publicly disclosed, but it was not because the Grand Fleet had suffered wastage or dulled its fighting edge during the long war. In terms of battle strength, England was never so formidable on blue water as she is today, nor has Germany been able to shift the ratio of mobilized sea power which is as three to two against her.

A glimpse of this sea power was dramatically revealed when a dawn, sombre and angry, slowly drove the darkness from the melancholy expanse of water. The wind had risen rapidly. It was a shouting gale which tore the shallow depths into foam-streaked combers huge and violent. The confused fury of the sea was astonishing. This sudden gale

which blew with a velocity of seventy miles an hour would have flattened the North Atlantic and then rolled it up in long, swinging surges. Here it tumbled the sea this way and that so that a ship was assaulted with unexpected blows and could find no respite.

Rain, spray, and mist were whirled along together. The horizon seemed no more than a mile away. From the bridge of a battleship one conjectured what would happen should a German fleet loom out of this rain and spindrift, at point-blank range.

"A short and merry scrap, take it from me," said a quartermaster with his glasses at his eyes. "The lads that got in the first punch would have it all their own way. Wow! With this rotten visibility? Fairly bumping into each other? Excuse me! Would there be anybody left to tell about it, I wonder? Salvos of big guns at two or three thousand yards? Well, it may break that way some day. You can't pick your weather in this game."

Off to port and starboard moved in dim perspective other lines of battleships. Dead ahead was the majestic superdreadnought which a British admiral had chosen for his flagship. The seas were leaping over her. They poured across her decks as a tide swirls over a reef. They reared and broke in white cascades about her turrets from which the great guns grimly showed their hooded snouts. Rolling ponderously, she exposed almost half her hull and

then plunged into it with bows clean under. Seas that will toss a thirty-thousand-ton battleship about in this fashion are indubitably rough.

Our own ship was making no better weather of it. The motion was not as erratic as that of a destroyer, but this great citadel of a vessel was by no manner of means comfortable to live in. Meals at the table in ward-room or admiral's cabin were out of the question. Chairs were lashed fast. Men moved with care lest they toboggan across the deck and break a leg. Water swashed in when the gun-ports rolled under and barelegged bluejackets were baling the floors with buckets. It was damp, gloomy, dismal below, with the hatches battened, but the ship had bucked through heavier storms than this, and these hundreds of American sailors were salt-water philosophers. It was a heap sight worse in the trenches, said they, and the guy who beefed about staying wet and losing sleep for twenty-four hours or so was a short-card sport.

The Admiral stolidly propped himself on the bridge and took the wind and spray as it came. He was disappointed. The course had not been changed and the Fleet was still steaming straight toward the enemy's coast, but the weather would probably spoil the show. The destroyers were having all they could do to live in it at all. They were hanging on and would not quit as long as they floated, but the seas were sweeping clean over them and they would be losing bridges and superstructures before long.

The Germans had all the luck when it came to weather, afloat or ashore.

There was a sudden diversion — a glimpse of something a few hundred yards off to starboard. It might be a slender bit of spar, but a red flag soared to a signal yard and spoke the submarine warning to the ships in column behind. A gun was fired and a shell splashed near the suspicious object which so closely resembled a periscope. It served as a reminder that the Fleet was cruising in perilous waters.

The Admiral was undisturbed by this momentary interruption. His ships had fought off submarine attacks before now. It was one of the annoyances of the service. He had reason to be in good spirits whenever he gazed astern and watched those other splendid ships of his as they crashed through the towering seas. Faultlessly they maintained their intervals and stations, hour after hour, and there was no reason to fear the critical eyes of the British admirals who looked on from their own divisions of battleships.

On deck, beyond the forward turret, several sailors in charge of a boatswain's mate were toiling to make things secure. Life-lines had been rigged to safeguard the men when the bow of the ship went roaring under and she shook herself clear of the water that streamed aft. One of these brave young bluejackets was not quite vigilant enough or perhaps he took a reckless chance and had nothing

WORKING A GUN IN A BRITISH SUBMARINE MOTHER SHIP

BRITISH WINTER KIT IN THE NORTH SEA
Commander Chetwode, R.N., in the middle

to cling to when a big sea stamped across the deck and carried him away with it. He was gone from his comrades in an instant, swept off into the chaos of broken water, blotted out with no warning.

The signal of "Man overboard" swiftly passed from ship to ship, but it was impossible to launch a boat. The one hope was to throw him a line or a life-belt if he drifted past on the crest of a billow. There was never a glimpse of him. He had given his life for his country, on active service. All he had to give he freely offered while engaged in a hard and dangerous task from which he had not hung back. The sacrifice was as complete as if he had died behind his gun. There was sorrow in his watch division, for his mates were fond of him, and the loud talk was hushed when they gathered for coffee and hash.

One of the British ships towed a kite balloon which had been sent up before leaving harbor. Then the gale had swept down and it became impossible to reel in the great gas bag without wrecking it and drowning the observer. He was therefore condemned to sway aloft in his basket, and there he stayed for twenty hours on end. By comparison the plight of a mariner marooned on a desert island would have seemed luxurious and safe. The ship steamed into the teeth of the gale and dragged the balloon with it. High above the deck it swayed and bobbed like an apple on a twig. Beneath it hung the tiny basket whose motions were wild and ter-

rific. It was snapped about like a game of crack the whip. All day long the basket was flung to and fro, sometimes tailing horizontally and then swinging off to describe another arc as startling. The lone observer was invisible. It was to be inferred that he was busily engaged in sticking fast to the inside of the basket with fingers, toes, and teeth. You expected to see catastrophe overtake him, that the balloon would collapse or break free and go rocketing off in the mist, or that this unfortunate captive would be shot out of his basket and tumble into the sea. Doubtless he expressed his emotions by telephone to his shipmates who could do no more than crane their necks and look on.

A junior watch officer of the American Navy gazed with sympathetic concern and shook his head as he observed: —

"That bird is distinctly out of luck. Wind cold enough to freeze your gizzard, and he just can't help being seasick. Nobody could. I shall never complain about anything — no, never again. And friends of mine want to be transferred to the kite balloon service! They ought to stand here and look at *that!*"

Only the commander-in-chief knew how many war vessels, great and small, were spread out over this region of the sea as a fleet. The mist concealed many of them, and their columns moved for miles beyond the field of vision. Other units might have moved out from their several bases to meet at the

appointed rendezvous somewhere in these clouded waters. They were all mysteriously in touch with one another, unhesitatingly following the courses assigned them.

For twelve hours they held their way, driving into wind and sea at a standard speed of twelve knots, and then reluctantly they turned and steered homeward. The weather had "spoiled the show." Again the enemy had eluded them and the challenge of the Grand Fleet was unavailing.

In the pitchy darkness of the second night the great ships picked up their landfalls and filed in through the narrow firth where the tide boiled in whirlpools and the sound of breakers was clamorous to starboard and to port. They dropped anchor or found their mooring-buoys, but not to rest inactive. The fire-room watches were keeping steam in the boilers and, as always, the Fleet was prepared to seek the sea if another alarm should call to action. Of this the German High Sea Fleet was well aware.

The British bluejackets were building a road on an island near by and several hundred American marines went ashore from their ships, next day, to help them. They turned to with a will, for this navy game was a partnership and it was not the proper thing to stand by and look on. There were the bone and gristle of real men under the khaki uniforms of these marines and they made the dirt fly with pick and shovel. A veteran sergeant who had won his service medals for Haiti and Vera Cruz

turned aside from his perspiring detachment to say: —

"It's healthy for them and it makes a hit with the Britishers. They like to see us willing to work as well as fight side by side. And we are making a pretty nifty little piece of road. Not that we pin bouquets on ourselves, but did you ever see a job that the marines could n't get away with? It don't seem long since I was in the conning-tower of a locomotive rattling freight cars over a crazy stretch of Central American railroad, and the lieutenant yonder was temporary mother superior of an orphan asylum until the nurses could be coaxed back into town."

"Even an orphan asylum would seem entertaining in this lonesome landscape," I suggested.

"You said it for me!" exclaimed the sergeant of marines. "It seems further from anywhere than any place I ever put the sole of my foot in. What with no towns at all and the natives few and far between, it is excellent for saving money because you can't spend a shilling, and your moral conduct is a hundred per cent because there are no temptations whatever. It's all to the good as the proper place to keep the German ships from breaking out, but I can't hand it anything else."

"And yet the men are fit and cheerful," I ventured.

"They were never healthier, taking the run of them. They tell me that the British ships have

averaged less than one per cent of men on the sick list. That's going some. Cheerful? We're kept too busy to grouch. Ships that are cleared for action all the time and kept smart and clean are not cluttered up with spare moments. Yes, we had one star entertainment, a bull's-eye. It was at Christmas and we were in port, somewhere between Land's End and John O'Groat's, — our first liberty on this side of the pond. Heard about it?

"Well, there was Christmas trees and fake fireplaces all over the ships, and socks hung up for dear old Santa Claus to slide down through a ventilator. And the Admiral pulled off his favorite stunt which was to invite a million or so poor kids aboard and give them a party. Counting noses, I suppose there was a thousand of them, to get it right. They were war orphans or their daddies were serving in France. We blew them off to a turkey dinner, and a moving-picture show, and clothes and shoes, and ten shillings in cash per kid, and what they could n't eat without busting they carried home in paper bags. It was no trouble at all to raise the funds. And was it worth it? Say, you forgot to be homesick.

"The kids sung Christmas songs and cheered the flag and the Admiral and the crews and the Navy. Then a gang of minstrels came over in boats from some British ships and serenaded us and we gave them a band concert, and when we turned in that night it did n't seem such a bum Christmas after all."

CHAPTER XVI

THE HUN AT HIS WORST

RUTHLESS submarine warfare has not blockaded the British Isles nor has it daunted British merchant seamen. Hamburg Harbor is dead and desolate, but London River is still a crowded road of empire, the turbid thoroughfare of a seaport great and ancient. Because the fairway is so narrow and so congested even in war-time, the sense of movement, of an incessant coming and going, is enhanced. All day long spars and funnels are sliding past, and at night winking lights, red and green and white, are arrayed in shifting constellations. Vessels under way shove through the press, and a din of whistles, imploring, warning, and scolding, swells the hubbub of winches, derricks, and the creak and whine of running gear which of all sounds is most suggestive of the sea. The palpitant industry of the river is quiet only when fog smothers it in a gray blanket.

Coastwise and offshore the traffic moves unhesitatingly, regardless of mine and torpedo, waiting only for the signal from the convoy or the Admiralty assurance that the Channel is swept. Even the Thames barges audaciously cross the Channel and carry cargoes to Boulogne and Dunkirk, passing within sight of the German bases on the Belgian

coast. Hoisting a red mainsail, jibs, topsail, and jigger, the Thames barge is no longer a clumsy hulk of a canal boat, rowed and pushed and scraped among others of her kind, but a weatherly vessel snoring along with lee deck awash or working to windward on the flood of the tide. Give her sea-room and a bright lookout to keep for hostile sea-planes and submarines, and the skipper becomes instantly nautical, no longer a plodding bargee. His orders ring out crisply, he strides the bit of a quarter-deck with the air of a true and seasoned British tar, and his crew of one or two lumpish lads moves at the trot.

To find the British sailormen of London River, who daily fare seaward, in waters where Germany has slain and drowned ten thousand of their comrades, I chanced to wander first into the old docks hidden below Tower Bridge. From the landward side it was a puzzle to find them without a guide. Small cargo steamers, barges, and shabby old brigs and schooners slid in from the river by a kind of vanishing trick and were lost to view behind massive brick walls. To wander afoot in this region and happen across these acres of vessels was much as if you should stumble across such a spectacle in the heart of Greenwich Village or lower New York.

Here were housed the heaps of ivory tusks, the spices of many tropic islands, and the good wines, port, sherry, and madeira, ripened in huge vaults and cellars underground. The tobacco sheds con-

tained the leaf of the Vuelta Abajo, of Sumatra and Virginia, and beneath other dingy roofs were coffee, teas, silks, and the potteries of China. Manual labor shifted these romantic cargoes from the barges to the rutted pavements. The elderly toilers, unfit for war, came from the Minories and other alien quarters near by, a swarthy, chattering multitude, and among them mingled many sailors born in other climes.

In a way, it was the England of bygone centuries when Drake and Raleigh and Martin Frobisher were bringing home just such cargoes as these found in new, mysterious lands or looted with clash of boarding pike and smoke of carronade from the gilded galleons of the plate fleets of Manila and Peru. And foreign sailors, much like these, were winging it from Venice and Genoa and the Canaries, and were singing their strange sea-songs among the streets and buildings whose aspect is but little changed.

The maritime England, the fruition of a thousand years of stubborn, unceasing endeavor, surviving wars almost innumerable, was to be wiped from blue water by Germany in a few months' time, as a sponge cleans a slate. There were few signs in London River to indicate that the merchant fleets under the red ensign had been utterly destroyed. The miles of larger docks and basins where the river widened were tenanted with large steamers side by side. There was the stir and pageantry of

shipping all the way to Gravesend which is the seaward boundary of London port.

Along the shore line toward the mouth of the Thames were suggestions to recall some of the most high-hearted pages of English history. Anchored training ships, obsolete three-deckers with painted ports, brought to mind the exploits of Rodney, Blake, and Cloudesley Shovel. On the lawn of the navy yard at Chatham Reach stood an old wooden figurehead of Nelson overlooking the bit of sloping shore from which the Victory was launched. The red lightship which warns mariners off the Nore sands marks a stretch of water reminiscent of mutinies, of sea-sights, of fleets keeping watch and ward.

At the Nore the ships of London River cease to trail in column and turn to go their several ways, the little coastwise craft through the channels to the northward, the deep-water ships steering east and south to join their convoys at the Downs, then vanishing hull down and under to follow the paths that lead them to all the havens of the charted oceans.

It was cheering to linger in a tavern at Gravesend, which some one else has compactly described as "all tea and shrimps, oilskins, sea-boots and bloaters." Off the wharves the red mooring-buoys sheered and twisted in the strong tide, and every vessel passing had to slow down for visits from the customs, the health officers, the Royal Navy, and

what-not. The causeway held an idling maritime population of pilots, fishermen, bluejackets, and merchant sailors ready with expert criticism of the manœuvres of the tugs, steamers, and sailing craft.

The tavern had a snug little parlor with a coal grate. Three master mariners, a mate, and an engineer had cast anchor in this comfortable refuge while an easterly wind drove the rain against the small-paned windows. They talked nothing but the war and their own trade, of course. Two of them had been recently in torpedoed ships and were on waiting orders.

"It seems as though the Huns 'ud get punished for it somehow," said the tall captain. A long strip of plaster over one eye covered a fresh wound. "Do you want to know what gets under my skin? It's the little mites of babies on passenger ships wearing tiny little life-preservers 'specially carried for them. To see 'em toddling around this way all through the war-zone is about as much as a man can stand."

"It's a marvel what the babies can stand," reflectively spoke the engineer. "Do you know the mate of the Alnwick Castle? An old shipmate of mine. He told me the yarn when he came home. He had thirty-one people in his boat after she was torpedoed, and they were three hundred and twenty miles from land. The weather was so heavy that he lost touch with the other boats during the first night. It was frightfully rough, a sea anchor out

and all that. The *chef* of the steamer died first. He could n't stand the cold, being flabby and used to the heat of the galley. Then the store-keeper went mad and had to be lashed to a thwart. He died soon after. A third-class passenger gave up the ghost that same day.

"Another night and squalls and sleet, and an able seaman died. All hands were suffering agonies from thirst and most of them were delirious. Next to go was a fireman who was found dead in the bottom of the boat at daylight, and then the pantry boy curled up and passed away. The mate tried to keep them from drinking salt water, but he was standing watch and watch at the tiller and there was a limit. They hoisted sail when they could, but had no stars to steer by.

"A cattleman who had been acting very dotty tried three times to jump overboard and at last succeeded. The others were too feeble to pull him in again. The last tot of fresh water was served out, — a mouthful apiece, — and then they tried to collect rain water, but all the clothing and canvas was so saturated with salt that what little they caught was undrinkable. They licked the oars, the seats, the gunwales in a frantic effort to gather rain drops, but the flying spray interfered. At last they smashed the empty water-breaker and licked the inside which was still damp. The deck-boy, who had been slowly sinking, died very quietly in the night.

"They sighted land after being adrift a week. The mast was carried away and they were nearly lost in the breakers. All hands were too weak to row or help themselves, but two fishing boats came out and towed them into Carino. The priest mustered the villagers and they lifted the people out of the boat. The linen-keeper died as he was being carried ashore and two of the crew who had gone mad refused to leave the boat. They had to be dragged out. The village was tremendously kind and the wives paid every attention to the two women and the baby —"

The audience in the tavern parlor interrupted as one man. As though it were a personal affront, the oldest captain thumped the table and protested: —

"Why the devil did n't you mention the women and the baby? It was cursed polite of us to listen to you at all. Do you always spin a yarn sternforemost, young man?"

"Of course there was a baby," answered the mate, quite unruffled. "It was four and a half months old. The mother could nurse it, I fancy, but how did she manage to live while so many hearty men died?"

"The men divided their whack of food and water with her," said the engineer, as a fact to be taken for granted. "And did this plucky little beggar of an infant pick up again?"

"No, it turned up its little toes in hospital six days later. The men hung about and demanded

bulletins every few minutes. They took it to heart. Some of them wept, I believe. And those who were strong enough went to the funeral service."

"I wish you had n't told it," blurted the tall captain with the plastered face. He brushed a hand across his eyes. He was a soft-hearted man. Having been with dead men in an open boat he could picture the scenes for himself.

There was one pudgy master mariner with chin whiskers who had remained silent. From a battered leather wallet he extracted a creased, soiled bit of printed paper. It was one of the little pamphlets prepared by Havelock Wilson, spokesman of the British Seamen's Union, for circulation in the cabins and forecastles of British and American ships, presenting the case in the simple, sober language of the sea. These documents are more appealing than the impassioned denunciations of orators, and they drive home, like white-hot rivets in a keel plate, the pledge which these seamen have sworn, — "No peace until the sea is free from Hun outrages." Their Union has declared a boycott on German ships, sailors, and cargoes for a term of five years after peace shall be declared. The reasons thereof are fairly obvious and the provocations have been written in letters of blood.

The grizzled master mariner cocked his spectacles athwart a fleshy nose and pointed to the title of his pamphlet, "The Way of the Briton and the Way of the Hun." He offered no comment, but

cleared his throat and began to read in a rumbling voice. The others paid attentive heed, gravely gazing at his bald head or into the coal fire: —

There was no bad feeling between the British and German seafaring men before the war began. At the outbreak of the war we British members of the Seamen's Union were sorry for the Germans because they could no longer get employment on our ships, and more especially we sympathized with those whom our Government felt it necessary to intern.

With regard to this and the way the sympathy came to an end I can tell you an interesting little story. The British Seamen's and Firemen's Union begged that those Germans who were members of the corresponding German union should be interned in a camp which was under the control of the Union, and greatly to its credit the British Government quickly consented to this evidence of our fraternal feeling.

So in a lovely district near Northampton a splendid place for the interned men was established. At one time it had about a thousand inmates. They had wooden huts to sleep in and four good meals a day. Their only guards were fourteen policemen who were never allowed actually to enter the camp. They had concert halls, cinema shows, and all kinds of musical entertainments. They had bottled beer three times a week, and each man was given four ounces of tobacco every seven days. It was mighty polite and fine imprisonment which they were called upon to endure — imprisonment far more comfortable than any freedom they had ever known.

We began to see a great light with regard to the real psychology of our German "brethren" on the day following the sinking of the Lusitania. A concert had

been organized for the amusement of the interned German members of the Union. After the dreadful news came, I and all the other members of the committee felt that this moment, just after five hundred of our fellow members had been done to death, was not the time for such a celebration, and I went to the camp. The Germans were called together and I explained to them that we would postpone the concert for the time out of respect to the five hundred of our fellow Union members who had perished.

There were about a thousand Germans in the hall listening to me, and when I stopped there was dead silence. I had anticipated that some one of them would say that he was sorry for the tragedy. Not a man did. I left the hall, and was scarcely outside the door before the men began to sing "The Watch on the Rhine" and other German patriotic songs. Presently the singing gave place to cheers. Soon after this the conduct of some of the interned Germans became so intolerable that it was impossible for us to maintain the camp under Union auspices, and its care and control were handed over to the Government.

Since then, as the Germans have continued their murderous campaign against seamen of all nations, sinking ships without warning, I have sent a communication to the Berlin headquarters of the International Federation. There a committee, consisting of four important labor men, was appointed to consider the matter and make a report. I have copies of this document. In it they seek to justify all that has been done — the sinking of the Lusitania with all her crew and passengers, the sinking of countless other ships when far away from land, the firing on boats full of passengers, the firing on crews escaping in open boats from sinking vessels, the taking of swimming

sailors on the decks of submarines, there stripping them of life-belts, and then submerging the decks under their feet.

This is how German merchant sailors were treated in England. The other side of the picture was revealed under the caption "Their Way":—

One of the most pitiful cases was that of John Bowditch, of Bristol, a stoker who had been taken at Hamburg early in August, when war was declared, and whose hard treatment in the hulks had brought on pneumonia. He was, when I saw him, just able to give his wife's name and address and ask me to write to her. His food, a little black bread of the coarsest description and a cup of black coffee, lay untouched beside him. He had no attendance except that of the other sick men in the ward for whom, in spite of their kindness, he was, especially in the night, a great trial.

The poor fellow was evidently doomed, although good nursing, perhaps, could have saved him. On my way back to camp, after one of my daily visits, I met the Herr Oberstabarzt, Dr. Reich. I accosted him and begged him to have Bowditch removed to a proper hospital, if necessary at the expense of the British Government.

"Who the devil are you?" he demanded with a scowl. I told him. "We have no hospital beds and no ambulances to spare for such cases," he shouted at me, "and what's more I'll thank you in future to mind your own business."

Three days later John Bowditch died, and when I went across that morning to the lazaret I found his Crimean shirt lying in the snow on the ground near the door, waiting to be burned. One of the patients

pointed out to me the clusters of lice with which it was covered. I shuddered to think that the poor fellow had evidently never had his shirt changed from the day he was taken prisoner in August to the day he died, and I suppose he had been too weak to say a word about it. . . .

British and American seamen need not be reminded of the fate of the crew of the Belgian Prince. Among those who must earn their bread upon the sea it will never be forgotten. Landsmen were horrified and, alas, some of them were incredulous. When the German submarine submerged with forty-three merchant sailors as captives on its deck and tried to drown them all, three survivors swam until saved by a friendly ship. This was not intended by the German assassins. It was nicely contrived that all hands should miserably perish. Dead men tell no tales.

The party of mariners who talked about these things in the Gravesend tavern had ceased to feel surprise or to exhibit sorrow. Death by violence at the hands of a barbarous enemy had become as incidental to their calling as a gale of wind or a lee shore. They had almost forgotten that ships once sailed unterrified and unmolested from port to port. The grizzled, battered master who had been reading aloud now tucked the little pamphlet in the old wallet and murmured absently: —

"Captain Hassan, of the Belgian Prince, is a prisoner in Germany unless the Huns have killed

him with starvation and neglect. I don't know but what it would ha' been luckier for him to go down with his crew. He hailed from my home port. Odd it is, but I met him just before he sailed that last time. He was low-spirited, — though a cheerful man by nature, — and something was warnin' him to stay ashore. Yes, the cherub that sits up aloft had whispered in his ear, as you might say. From what he told me there 's no doubt in my mind that Captain Hassan had premonitions. It sounds singular, so it does, but we've all had experiences."

The others nodded assent. The engineer left a mug of ale untasted and began to walk the floor, his hands in the pockets of his blue coat. He was a dour, sallow man who had served his time in mail boats under the torrid skies of tropic seas.

"Four thousand British merchant seamen in German prison camps!" he exclaimed. "They wish they were dead — I'll lay you any odds on that. God, how those filthy Germans hate us! And we all had good friends among them before the war. They did a rotten job for the Belgian Prince, but what else would you expect? It was on a bigger scale than usual. That's why it made a sensation. The same spirit has been shown a hundred times."

"Right-o," said one of the others. "I was thinking just then of the one lone kiddie that was saved from the Thracia. Fifteen years old he was, and acting fourth officer of the steamer, if you please.

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MEN ESCAPING FROM A VESSEL TORPEDOED BY A GERMAN SUBMARINE

The splash of one of the men dropping into the water can be seen

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THE BOATS OF A TORPEDOED VESSEL PICKING UP SWIMMING MEN

Seven of them hung to a smashed boat, mostly wounded by shell-fire, and all were washed off and drowned except this boy. After a while the submarine heaved up and an officer bawled questions — the name of the ship, cargo, destination, and so on. Cold-blooded, eh? This lad all numbed, alone, hanging to a wreck of a boat!

"'Are you an Englishman?' this fine, manly German officer asked him.

"'You can bet your last bob I am,' the kid piped up.

"'Then I shall shoot you,' said the brave commander.

"'Shoot away and be damned to you,' was the reply.

"This seems to have puzzled the Hun. By rights, the boy should have flung up his hands and bawled 'Kamerad.' The officer's dignity was ruffled, and of course he had no sense of humor, so he swelled up and retorted: —

"'I will not powder waste on a pig of an Englishman. Drown, you leetle swine, drown.'

"With this he rang up full speed and sheered off to look for another ship to sink. The boy had lashed himself to his bit of wreckage and he tumbled about in the sea for thirteen hours before a fishing boat found him. He was insensible then, but soon came around again, as lively as a cock-sparrow and putting on a bit of swank as an 'acting fourth officer' who had slanged a German submarine."

The talk swung back to the Belgian Prince and it was suggested: —

"The newspapers printed the facts, but the sworn statements of the survivors ought to be put in a book for people to keep handy by 'em. Here was the chief engineer, Thomas Bowman by name, a trustworthy man. He had served twelve years with the Prince Line and held a first-class Board of Trade certificate. And the American nigger — he's rated intelligent and reliable according to reports from Norfolk. You don't have to tell seafaring men anything about it, but land-lubbers may forget."

Taking the advice of these worthy mariners of the Gravesend tavern, I found these tragic documents among the records of the Admiralty and submit herewith the story of the chief engineer: —

At 7.50 P.M. on the night of July 31 the Belgian Prince was travelling along at ten knots when she was struck. The weather was fine and the sea smooth. It was a clear day and just beginning to darken. I was on the after deck of the ship, off watch, taking a stroll and having a smoke. The donkeyman shouted out, — "Here's a torpedo coming." I turned and saw the wake on the port about a hundred yards away. I yelled a warning, but the words were no more than out of my mouth when we were hit.

I was thrown on deck by a piece of spar, and when I recovered I found the ship had a very heavy list to port and almost all the crew had taken to the boats. I got into the starboard lifeboat which was my station. Until then I had seen no submarine, but now heard it firing a machine gun at the other side of the ship. With

a larger gun it shot away the radio wires aloft so that we could send out no S.O.S. messages. As soon as we had pulled away from the ship I saw the U-boat which promptly made toward our own boats and hailed us in English, commanding us to come alongside her. We were covered by their machine gun and revolvers. We were in two lifeboats and the captain's dinghey.

The submarine commander then asked for our captain and told him to come on board, which he did. He was taken down inside the submarine and we saw him no more. The rest of us, forty-three in number, were then ordered to board the submarine and to line up on deck. A German officer and several sailors were very foul and abusive in their language. They ordered us, in English, to strip off our life-belts and overcoats and throw them down on the deck.

When this was done they proceeded to search us, making us hold up our hands and threatening us with revolvers. These sailors, while they passed along the deck and were searching us, deliberately kicked most of the life-belts overboard from where we had dropped them. Beyond making us take off our life-belts and coats there was no interference with our clothing. They robbed me of my seaman's discharge book and certificate which they threw overboard, but kept four one-pound notes.

After searching us, the German sailors climbed into our life-boats and threw out the oars, gratings, tholepins, and baling tins. The provisions and the compass they lugged aboard the submarine. They then smashed our boats with axes so as to make them useless, and cast them adrift. I saw all this done myself. Several of the German sailors then got into our dinghey and rowed to the Belgian Prince. These men must have been taken off later, after they had ransacked the ship.

The submarine then moved ahead for a distance of several miles. I could not reckon it accurately because it was hard to judge her speed. She then stopped, and after a moment or two I heard a rushing sound like water pouring into the ballast tanks of the submarine.

"Look out for yourselves, boys!" I shouted. "She is going down."

The submarine then submerged, leaving all our crew in the water barring the captain who had been taken below. We had no means of escape but for those who had managed to retain their life-belts. I tried to jump clear, but was carried down with the submarine, and when I came to the surface I could see only about a dozen of our men left afloat, including a young lad named Barnes who was shouting for help.

I swam toward him and found that he had a life-belt on, but was about paralyzed with cold and fear. I held him up during the night. He became unconscious and died while I was holding him. I then took his life-belt and waited for daylight. All this time I could hear no other men in the water. When dawn broke I could see the Belgian Prince about a mile and a half away and still floating. I began to swim in her direction, but had not gone far when I saw her blow up.

I then drifted about in the life-belt for an hour or two longer and saw smoke on the horizon. This steamer was laying a course straight for me, having seen the explosion of the Belgian Prince. She proved to be a British naval vessel which also found the two other survivors in the water. We were taken to port and got back our strength after a while. None of us had given the submarine commander and crew any reason for their behavior toward us. And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing it to be true.

One of these three castaways was an American negro, William Snell, of Norfolk, who had shipped as a fireman in the Belgian Prince. Having recovered from this trying experience, he went as cook in the British steamer Kenmore and was again torpedoed and escaped. Snell had been crossing the Atlantic for three years and the war-zone was an old story. It was his misfortune to stutter in his speech when excited, and his written deposition runs more smoothly than if he should attempt to tell you the story himself. One can fancy him, however, as standing on the deck of the submarine, teeth chattering, eyeballs rolling, while he mutters to a shipmate: —

"W-hat yo' reckon d-dese yere Germans aimin' to do, b-buddy? Snatchin' away a man's life-b-belt don't look g-good to me nohow. I kin swim better'n mos' men, b-but after th' first hundred miles mah w-wind 's liable to give out."

Having clambered aboard the submarine under compulsion, William Snell awaited the turn of events in a mood of the liveliest curiosity darkened with forebodings, and later described the tragedy in this detailed manner: —

Two men of the submarine's crew stayed on top of the conning-tower with rifles in their hands which they kept trained on us. Seven other Germans stood abreast of our line on the starboard side of the boat, armed with automatic pistols. The captain of the submarine, a blond man with blue eyes, was also on deck and stood

near the forward gun, giving orders to his crew in German and telling them what to do. Pretty soon he walked along in front of the men of the Belgian Prince, asking them if they had arms on them. He ordered us to take off our life-belts and throw them on deck, which we did. As they dropped at our feet he helped his sailors pick them up and sling them overboard.

When I threw my belt down I shoved it along on the deck with my foot and finally stood on it. As the commander walked along the line he huddled us together in a crowd and then went and pulled the plugs out of our life-boats which were lying on the starboard side of the submarine. When he went back to the conning-tower I quickly picked up my belt and hid it under a big, loose oilskin which I was wearing when I left the Belgian Prince. The Germans did not make me take it off when they searched me. I hugged the life-belt close to my breast with one arm.

When the commander returned to the conning-tower, four German sailors came on deck from below and got into our captain's small boat which was on the port side. The submarine then backed a little, steamed ahead, and rammed and smashed one of our lifeboats, which had been cast adrift.

The four men who had jumped into our captain's boat now pulled alongside the Belgian Prince. The submarine then got under way and moved ahead at about nine knots, as near as I could guess, leaving her four men aboard the Belgian Prince, and all of us, except our skipper, huddled together on the forward deck which was almost awash.

She steamed like this for some time, and then I noticed that the water was rising slowly on the deck until it came up to my ankles. I had also noticed, a little while before this, that the conning-tower was

closed. The water kept on rising around my legs, and when it got almost up to my knees I pulled out my life-belt, threw it over my shoulders and jumped overboard. The other men did n't seem to know what was going to happen. Some of them were saying: —

"I wonder if they mean to drown us."

About ten seconds after I had jumped I heard a suction as of a vessel sinking and the submarine had submerged entirely, leaving the crew of the Belgian Prince to struggle in the water.

I began to swim toward our own ship which I could see faintly in the distance, it being not very dark in that latitude until late in the evening. The water was not cold, like the winter-time, and I was not badly chilled, but swam and floated all night, on my back and in other positions. One of our crew, who had no life-belt, kept about five yards from me for half an hour after the submarine submerged. Then he became exhausted and sank. I could hear many other cries for help, but I could not see the men.

Later in the night I heard a whirring noise, something like an aeroplane, which I thought was the submarine coming back to the Belgian Prince to pick up her sailors. When day came there were lots of bodies of old shipmates floating around me. Then about five o'clock, as near as I can judge, I made out the Belgian Prince and four men coming over the side. They had been lowering some stuff into a boat. I cried out, "Help, help!" but they paid no attention to me.

Then the submarine came to the surface and the four sailors hoisted their stuff out of the rowboat and were taken aboard. Ten minutes later the submarine submerged. Then there was a great explosion as the Belgian Prince broke in two and sunk. Soon I saw a vessel approaching and she passed me, but turned and

came back just in time. I was all in. It was a British patrol steamer, and as soon as I came to I made a full report to her captain of the loss of the Belgian Prince and the drowning of her crew.

There remains to be accounted for an able seaman named George Silenski who was a Russian. His mind was clear and his account coherent, in so far as it related to his dreadful treatment at the hands of the German commander. Of this he said:—

A German officer ordered the crew to give up their life-belts. His men smashed the two lifeboats and took the little boat for their own use. Then the submarine ran for half an hour, dived, and all our crew were left in the water. Then I swam toward the ship all night, although I had no life-belt or anything to support me. About five o'clock in the morning I reached the Belgian Prince and climbed on board. I stayed there about an hour and got some dry clothes and put them on.

I saw the submarine come near the ship and three or four of her men climbed on board. I hid and they did not notice me. They had come to put bombs in the ship, so I jumped overboard from the poop with a life-belt on. The submarine fired two shells into the ship to make her hurry up and sink. Then the Germans steamed away. I climbed into our little boat which had been left adrift and stayed there until a British patrol ship came along and picked me up.

Three men saved from the sea as these survivors were, separately interrogated by the master of the ship which found them, could not possibly concoct a gigantic falsehood of this description. They spoke

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AN AMERICAN DESTROYER PICKS UP A BOATLOAD OF SURVIVORS

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AN AMERICAN SCHOONER BOMBARDED AND SET ON FIRE BY A SUBMARINE

the truth, damnatory, imperishable, and through them the souls of their dead comrades cried out for retribution. Straight these drowned seamen went to Fiddler's Green where the souls of all good mariners go, and there they may thumb their harps and sip their grog and sing the chantey that another Englishman has written for them: —

"Come all ye jolly mariners and list ye while I tell,
Afore we heave the capstan round and meet the Channel swell,
Of a handy ship, and sailor lads, and women-folk, a score,
And gallant gentlemen who sail below the ocean floor;
A tale as new and strange and true as any historie,
Of the German law and courtesie
And custom of the sea."

Conspicuous among the names of the seamen who have died for England and the cause of the Allies will be that of Captain Charles Fryatt, of the Great Eastern Railway's steamer Brussels, which ran on the route between Tilbury and the Hook of Holland. She was captured by the Germans and taken into Zeebrugge on the 23d of June, 1916. Five days later this official announcement was made public by the same German Government which later sanctioned the murder of the crew of the Belgian Prince: —

On Thursday at Bruges before the Court Martial of Marine Corps the trial took place of Captain Fryatt, of the British steamer Brussels, which was brought in as a prize. The accused was condemned to death because, although he was not a member of a combatant

force, he made an attempt, on the afternoon of the 28th of March, 1915, to ram the German submarine U-33 near the Maas Lightship.

The accused, as well as the first officer and the chief engineer of the steamer, received at the time from the British Admiralty a gold watch as a reward for his brave conduct on that occasion, and his action was mentioned with praise in the House of Commons.

On the occasion in question, disregarding the U-boat's signal to stop and show his national flag, he turned at a critical moment at high speed against the submarine which escaped the steamer by a few metres only because of swiftly diving. He confessed that in so doing he had acted in accordance with the instructions of the Admiralty. The sentence was confirmed yesterday afternoon and carried out by shooting.

This is one of the many nefarious *franc-tireur* proceedings of the British merchant marine against our war vessels, and it has found a belated but merited expiation.

On the same day of the execution of Captain Fryatt the British passenger liner Falaba was torpedoed and sunk without warning. She went to the bottom in eight minutes and carried with her one hundred and four men, women and children, who were "not members of a combatant force."

CHAPTER XVII

ADMIRALS OF THE WAR-ZONE

FROM a staff above the doorway of one of a row of sedate mansions facing Grosvenor Gardens floats an American flag. The visitor is confronted, not by a smug London butler with mutton-chop whiskers, but by a spruce young orderly of the United States Marine Corps who demands to know one's business in accents courteous but firm. He will promptly send your card upstairs, and if no other engagements are pressing it will be your pleasure to meet Vice-Admiral Sims, commanding the American Naval Forces in European waters. Affable and democratic, he may tell you this story of the old Navy as a warning to officers who take their rank too seriously.

"One Sunday morning a pompous admiral in command of a navy yard was a trifle late at chapel. The chaplain was 'fresh caught,' that is, a young man whose conception of the relative importance of things was still so defective that he began the service before the arrival of the admiral, who entered just in time to hear the announcement, 'The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him.'

"'Sir,' thundered the admiral, 'I would have you understand that the Lord is *not* in his holy temple until I have taken my seat!'

"The old autocrat dozed comfortably through the remainder of the service until the chaplain announced that communion would be held in the chapel on the following Sunday 'by order of the bishop of the diocese.' The words 'by order' fetched the admiral bolt upright in his chair and he sternly demanded: —

"'By whose order did you say, sir?'

"'By the order of the bishop of the diocese, sir,' faltered the chaplain.

"Well, sir, let me inform you that I am the bishop of this diocese when it comes to giving orders, and there will be no communion service here next Sunday."

There is no lack of dignity in the demeanor of the American Vice-Admiral whose responsibilities extend from the Irish Sea to the Mediterranean. He believes, however, that discipline and efficiency can be maintained without the harsh, unreasoning severity of the old blue-water school. During many years of his brilliant career he has fought and worked for two essential things, — better gunnery and "the happy ship," — and his influence has conspicuously helped to achieve both. His ability as a naval officer is unquestioned at home and abroad, but personality has been also a winning factor. Men have always served him devotedly, because they felt confidence in him, not because they feared him. And this is as he would have it.

Tall, spare, and as straight as a lance, Admiral

VICE-ADMIRAL WILLIAM S. SIMS

Sims seems so youthful that it would be tactless to mention his years. The small gray beard, very trimly kept, is rather exceptional among the clean-shaven naval officers of to-day. A complexion as fresh as a midshipman's and the eye of a sailor, frank and alert, harmonize with the whole impression of him, — a man at the peak of his mental vigor and usefulness, with driving power for the task in hand.

He has always been aggressive. As a younger man his ideas disturbed a Navy Department which was somewhat encrusted with barnacles, but it was impossible to ignore him. His doctrine was to be sure he was right, then go ahead, and damn the torpedoes. As a gunnery expert he came to the conclusion that the fire of the American ships in the battle of Santiago was deplorably, inexcusably poor, and that it was high time to overhaul and modernize the system of target practice. Opposing him was a spirit of conservatism which was content to let well enough alone. Dewey had shot the Spanish ships to pieces in Manila Bay, and Cervera's cruiser squadron had been annihilated in the Caribbean. There was nothing wrong with an American Navy which could boast of such achievements as these.

Sims knew better. It was not the fashion to admit that anything could be learned from England, but his own observations enabled him to comprehend that American gunnery methods had been made obsolete by the extraordinary genius of Cap-

tain Percy Scott, of the British Navy. Henceforth the worth of a ship in the battle line was to be measured in terms of its hitting power. Target practice was no longer to be infrequent, haphazard, and considered a nuisance. It must be precise, scientific, and highly specialized. Sims took nothing by hearsay, but visited the British cruisers on the China station and was courteously permitted to obtain such information as he desired. It comprised the essentials of the modern school of fire control, range-finding, and sub-calibre practice.

It is a story that has been often retold — how this enthusiastic officer was ignored when his recommendations were submitted to the Navy Department and how he dared to risk smashing his own career for the good of the service. Over the heads of his superiors he carried the issue directly to the President, Theodore Roosevelt, who was always ready to cut red tape when the end justified the means. As Commander-in-Chief of the Navy, the President approved the plans for making the ships shoot straighter and harder and Sims went unpunished for his temerity.

As a vice-admiral he has this same trait of aiming straight at the mark, but there is no longer a lack of sympathy in Washington when he presents ideas which will increase the efficiency of ships or personnel. He is a sociable man, talking with ease and readiness, and always entertaining, but his confidences are carefully guarded, and he steers a diffi-

cult course with the instinct of a diplomat, although he may seem to discuss naval affairs with impulsive candor. When in a reminiscent mood he unconsciously portrays his own character and indicates the spirit and the influence which he has endeavored to foster in the American naval service. Referring to his creed of the "happy ship," he was contrasting conditions past and present and mentioned such incidents as these: —

"About sixty years ago flogging was a recognized form of punishment and was regularly practised in the American Navy. A man was stripped to the waist, his arms triced above his head, and he was given the number of strokes with the 'cat' which had been assigned for the particular offence. It was believed to be necessary for the maintenance of discipline, and its abolition by act of Congress was resented by many officers. When the new regulations were received on a certain ship in the Pacific, the commanding officer had all hands called aft on the quarter-deck to witness punishment. A man who had been sentenced to be flogged was doubly ironed with his hands behind his back and placed in front of the bilge pump, from which a stream of water was turned on his face until he became insensible. Whenever he recovered consciousness the operation was repeated until the doctor reported that further punishment would endanger the man's life. Then the captain made a little speech in which he informed the crew that, although flog-

ging had been abolished, he wished it clearly understood that he intended to have discipline in his ship.

"An executive officer of another man-of-war was dissatisfied with the listless manner in which a man was sweeping down the deck. The sailor said he was not feeling well, whereupon the executive officer ordered him to be 'spread-eagled,' — that is, he was triced up by the wrists inside the main rigging with his arms stretched wide and allowed to hang there until he begged for mercy. He was then cut down and ordered to sweep the deck properly. He declared that he could no longer hold the broom and was about to be triced up again when, upon the suggestion of the captain, who had witnessed the episode, he was examined by the surgeon, who reported that both of his collar bones were broken.

"On this same ship a common form of punishment then considered quite mild, was to lash a man's thumbs together behind his back, pass the lashing over a hammock hook, and trice him up until his toes were just clear of the deck. It seems to have been the general opinion in those days that the only forms of punishment that were effective were those which inflicted physical pain. Any man who was slow in obeying orders ran the risk of a blow from a rope's end or a belaying pin in the hands of the nearest boatswain's mate. When hammocks were piped up, or all hands called on deck to make or furl sail, it was a common practice to station at the foot of each ladder a husky boatswain's mate armed

with the dreadful 'cat' and charged with the duty of slashing the last man across that part of his anatomy which was last to disappear up the ladder. This was not considered punishment, but merely a reminder of the captain's desire to have a 'smart ship.'

"Aside from this brutality, there was an exasperating devotion to numerous regulations which concerned form and ceremony rather than efficiency. An officer was presumed to find fault. There was one captain who used to come on deck each morning, growl at every one he met, and then go down to breakfast in the happy frame of mind that is the reward of duty well performed. One morning he was unable to find the slightest fault with anything. The crew and the officers had determined to satisfy him for once and nothing was left undone. All brasswork shone like gold, sails were trimmed to a hair, gear coiled down, the decks as clean as a Dutch kitchen, and even the last grain of sand was blown out of the deck seams. The old man waxed madder and madder as he paced the quarter-deck searching for a flaw and found none. Finally he hailed the lookout on the topsail yard and, in reply to a prompt 'Sir,' shouted, 'I'm a-lookin' at ye, dad gast ye!' and went below in a towering rage.

"There were not a few cases of vessels that were shipshape from truck to keel, scrubbed, painted, and polished to perfection, but with gun crews untrained and gun gear 'frozen.' Such ships have been known to dump their target practice ammu-

nition overboard to avoid having the paint-work tarnished by powder gases. I was once present at a target practice where all but one round of the ammunition from a twelve-inch turret was fired by the turret officer sticking his head out through a hatch in the roof of the turret and sighting over a ringbolt at the forward end. The smoke of the first shot had clouded the telescope sights so that the pointers could not see the target, but the captain insisted that the guns be fired all the same. Of course, no hits were made, but the object of getting the ship back into port on schedule time was achieved."

"In contrast with this is the happy, efficient ship, for the happy ship is almost invariably efficient. Officers and men will brag about such a ship. They will not allow her to take second place in anything if they can help it. Every man loyally does his best to help along, and the ship becomes a practical school for developing the two chief essentials of military character, loyalty, and initiative. I knew an officer who was a polished gentleman in all respects except that he failed to treat his enlisted subordinates with courtesy and consideration. His manner toward them was sarcastic and sometimes insulting, and he failed utterly to inspire their loyalty to the service. Another distinguished officer said, after reaching the retired list, 'The mistake of my career was that I did not treat young officers with respect, and subsequently they were the means of defeating my dearest ambitions.'"

Among themselves the young officers of the destroyer fleet affectionately refer to their Vice-Admiral as "Bill" Sims, and you may be sure that he would not feel offended should he chance to overhear it. He realizes how precious an asset to the service is the eager allegiance and chivalrous self-sacrifice of youthful ideals. If they presume to know it all, he smiles and listens with wise tolerance or finds such a text as this to fit the sermon: —

"Two rosy ensigns were sitting in the deck-house of the old receiving ship Colorado when they noticed that every time the quartermaster entered he carefully removed his cap and laid it upon the deck. He was a man old enough to be their grandfather, and they told him that he need not remove his cap, — the deck-house was the same as if he were out of doors. He replied most respectfully: —

"'You young gentlemen knows so much more as what I do that I just feels like takin' off me hat.'"

Secretary Daniels has been called the friend of the enlisted man and he has endeavored to wipe out the spirit of snobbery and social caste which a few officers have mistaken for discipline. The friendly relations between the quarter-deck and the enlisted men of the American Navy have stood the exacting tests of war and there is no need of Prussianizing them. So rigorous a critic as Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly informed Admiral Sims that he would sooner have the fleet of American destroyers under his command than any similar ships afloat.

A thorough student of naval history, Admiral Sims emphasizes the doctrine of team work and is fond of quoting Nelson as a supreme illustration, remarking of him: —

"His methods and their success are perhaps better known in all navies than those of any other of the great naval commanders. His method was that of the conference. He discussed his principles, methods, and plans with all of his captains so frequently that all were thoroughly acquainted with them. These plans thus became those of the captains as well as of the admiral. They were the plans of the fleet, of their organization. This fleet was a team trained to work together with perfect loyalty to the fleet and its leader. There was consequently no ground for criticism excepting that which was invited and fully considered in general conference.

"Moreover, Nelson never spoke ill of his subordinates, but frequently praised them. He was the friend and protector of his officers and others who were in trouble. When a certain captain complained that the Admiralty had sent him several useless officers, Nelson said, 'Send them to my ship. I can make a good officer out of any decent man.' When a young middy of his ship got into a panic on his first attempt to go aloft, Nelson sprang into the rigging after him, told him how sorry he was for a midshipman who was afraid to climb aloft, and encouraged him until he recovered from his fright. On another occasion he came on deck and found the

ship 'in irons,' — that is, caught head to wind and sailing backward, — but, instead of abusing the officer of the deck and telling him he did n't know his business, he asked him what he thought he would better do. The officer said he did n't know, and Nelson replied, 'Neither do I,' and went below.

"Under such conditions it is impossible to imagine disaffection, disloyalty, or failure to do his utmost on the part of any officer who served under this leader. It is also easy to understand how successfully his captains could fight a battle without his personal guidance."

The spirit of the American Navy of to-day is truthfully reflected in a group of admonitions which Admiral Sims addressed to an audience of officers before the summons came to active service in the war-zone. These were his own precepts, but they echoed the sentiments which prevail in the Navy Department and which account, in part, for the superb record of the ships, the men, and the organization.

"Be sure you know the subject of your instructions before you give them. Knowledge of your job always commands respect from those associated with you.

"Encourage your men to come to you for information and take pains to look it up and supply it. Help them in anything they may want to study.

"Train them to think for themselves by putting

it up to them on all proper occasions and explain why you do it.

"Always be considerate of inexperience. When reproof will correct a small fault it is almost always a mistake to inflict punishment.

"Be absolutely just. All kinds of men respond to the square deal.

"Avoid harshness in manner or method. Let penalties be inflicted in sorrow, not anger. Always give the man the benefit of any reasonable doubt.

"Never hurt a man's self-respect by humiliating him before others. You will thereby impair his usefulness. A man who is called down in public will surely resent it. Frequent 'sanding down' of your men is a common mistake.

"Do not let the state of your liver influence your attitude toward your men.

"Before you take any action or adopt any line of conduct that concerns one or all of your men, consider carefully its effect upon loyalty, development of character, upon the discipline of the organization."

It is not unlikely that Admiral Sims would prefer the deck of a flagship to the London headquarters in which he directs his staff of hard-working officers. He is no swivel-chair sailor. Among his friends of the British Navy there is one whom he has particularly envied — a man whose record for hard fighting since the beginning of the war is unsurpassed. This is Rear-Admiral Sir Reginald Tyrwhitt, of the

ADMIRAL SIR REGINALD TYRWHITT
Of the British Light Cruiser Division

ADMIRAL SIR LEWIS BAYLY
Commander-in-Chief of the coasts of Ireland

famous light cruiser division. It was rather to be taken for granted that in the dashing attack on the German base of Zeebrugge he should be mentioned as commanding "a covering force." Wherever trouble brews in the North Sea, from the Dover Strait to the Orkneys, one may be fairly certain that Tyrwhitt's ships are proceeding thither at a speed of thirty knots. Beautiful vessels they are, resembling magnified destroyers, a type evolved by the war, with guns that can deliver punishing blows.

The following note is a cherished souvenir: —

MY DEAR PAINE: —

I am so sorry we have not managed a cruise yet, but life has been *so* uneventful from the cruisers' point of view lately. I shall hope to see you on board later on. With kindest regards

Yours very sincerely

REGINALD TYRWHITT

I had dined with him aboard his flagship, expecting to meet a man who would suggest, in some degree, the fiery, audacious courage and ardor for battle which he had consistently displayed. The Admiral Tyrwhitt who welcomed me to his cabin was low-voiced and gentle. His shoulders stooped a little and he would not have been called robust. Promotion had come rapidly and he was younger than many officers of the same rank in his own service. Very bushy black brows, features rather reflective than bold, a smile that had a certain winsome quality, — these things were noted at first

glance. He was courtesy personified. It was difficult to fancy him giving peremptory orders to any one. He seemed more likely to ask one of his ships to be so kind as to attack the first cruiser of the enemy's column, or his own crew please to do him the favor of ramming the vessel abreast, if perfectly convenient to them. Appearances in the case of Admiral Tyrwhitt were singularly deceptive. There have been other mild-mannered heroes in naval history.

He talked, and most agreeably, at the table, or gave this impression. The fact was that he had the knack of listening and persuading the others that he was loquacious. During one of the silences he observed, in a pensive manner: —

"What a jolly good war this would have been, — without the submarines."

His meaning was obvious. It required no comment. The captain of his ship smiled across the table and nodded agreement. And yet in spite of the submarines Admiral Reginald Tyrwhitt had managed to wage a jolly good war of it. Concerning his own exploits he said not a word. When questions were asked him he answered with brevity and perfect good-nature, but there was no turning on the tap of narrative. Until late in the evening we sat by the fire and talked of everything but the Arethusa. The Admiral was of the opinion that others could tell of this lost ship far better than he. When she went down, after striking a mine, her superstructure bore the words, painted in gold

letters, "Heligoland, Aug. 28, 1914." Hers was an old name in the British Navy, and a brass plate, also conspicuously affixed, held two verses of the fine sea-song that begins: —

"Come, all ye jolly sailors bold,
Whose hearts are cast in honor's mould,
While English glory I unfold —
Huzza to the Arethusa!
She's a frigate tight and brave
As ever stemmed the dashing wave;
Her men are staunch
To their fav'rite launch,
And when the foe shall meet our fire,
Sooner than strike, we'll all expire
On board the Arethusa."

This latest of the saucy Arethusas won her first round of glory in the initial naval engagement of the Great War — the battle of the Bight. "The principle of the operation," announced the Admiralty, "was a scooping movement by a strong force of destroyers, headed by the Arethusa, to cut the German light craft from home and engage them at leisure in the open sea." The strategy was successful. The Arethusa, with Commodore Reginald Tyrwhitt on the bridge, had left the builder's yard only forty-eight hours earlier. The ship and her crew had had no chance to shake down. When close to Heligoland, they saw in the haze a German light cruiser and a fleet of destroyers and engaged them at two thousand yards. One of the English officers tried to describe it.

"Another German cruiser came up and ranged past her partner, adding to the rain of shells bursting around and upon the struggling Arethusa, until, with all but one of her guns silenced, she stood out of the fight for a moment to regain breath. Neither of the enemy's cruisers followed, for both had all they wanted. Fifty-five strenuous minutes, and then with the wreckage cleared away, the wounded carried below, and her guns again fit for action, the Arethusa came back for more. Into the haze she steamed, seeking her old opponents, and, having found them, redoubled her previous efforts. Very few minutes sufficed this time. One of the cruisers burst into flames and the other was visibly sinking."

Still afloat and able to fight, the Arethusa moved on to seek a fresh encounter. The British destroyers were hard-pressed by a heavier force, and she stood and hammered the enemy for another half-hour, her sides torn with shell, decks strewn with dead and wounded, Commodore Tyrwhitt gazing from under those bushy brows of his while a shell exploded in the ammunition and set the ship ablaze and the signal officer was killed at his elbow.

Five months later, off the Dogger Bank, a German squadron of heavy ships was whipped by Admiral Beatty's battle cruisers. With them was the light division, including Tyrwhitt in the Arethusa. When the fleeing Blücher was crippled and fell behind her consorts, it was the Arethusa that

ADMIRAL BEATTY

put two fatal torpedoes into her at fifteen hundred yards. The German sailors were lined up on deck awaiting the end, some of the officers shaking hands and bidding each other farewell. "Jump!" shouted the crew of the Arethusa as she came alongside. Some of them did and so were saved.

The fighting commodore shifted his flag to another new cruiser when the plucky Arethusa met her finish, and he continued to roam the North Sea with a chip on his shoulder. His was a more fortunate destiny than that vouchsafed the Grand Fleet of which Admiral Beatty said, in humorous protest, after a year of war: —

"The Navy started in with a whoop of joy. We were at last to put to the proof the weapon which we had spent many weary years in perfecting, the weapon which many thousands of distinguished men had given their lives in making efficient, and we congratulated ourselves upon the opportunity which was thrown into our hands to prove to the world that the British Navy was an absolutely incalculable factor. We started full of promise of what we were about to do, but the promise has fallen away. We thought we were going to follow in the footsteps of the heroes of a hundred years ago, but what has been the result? We have barged about the North Sea, missing mines and dodging submarines, and our patrol vessels have kept our harbors intact."

Behind a massive gateway of the vast and ram-

bling Government buildings of Whitehall is the Admiralty. These gray stone walls, darkened by age and London smoke, will quicken the imagination of a visitor who is at all familiar with the influence of sea power, past and present.

"The Lords of the Admiralty" is a resounding phrase. It recalls Stevenson's contention that "if the Indian Empire, the trade of London, and all the outward and visible ensigns of our greatness should pass away, we should still leave behind us a durable monument of what we were in these sayings and doings of the English Admirals."

He spoke in behalf of Englishmen, but the world has changed since then, and the fame of great admirals, both British and American, has become a joint heritage of the Anglo-Saxon race. In the Royal Navy you will find ungrudging admiration for those splendid captains and their matchless frigates, Isaac Hull in the Constitution, Stephen Decatur in the United States, whose victories in single-ship actions consoled Americans for some rather sorry defeats by land.

The two navies fought it out and have forgotten the ancient hostilities and grievances which are still fed and fostered in the innocent minds of our children by rancorous schoolbooks. These ignore the fact that the impressment of seamen, over which the War of 1812 was fought, had become as intolerable to the English people as it was to the American Republic. It was an Englishman who de-

nounced the system "as striking at the very foundations of domestic life and bringing to thousands of households a poverty as bitter and a grief as poignant as death. . . . The nature of the thing which they had cherished so blindly filled them with rage and incited them to violence. . . . The war with America, incurred for the sole purpose of upholding the right of impressment, taught them the lengths to which their rulers were still prepared to go in order to enslave them."

This old Admiralty building is mellowed by tradition and filled with memorable associations. There is no bustling haste in the halls and passages which seem to wind at random, nor up and down the stairways whose stones are deeply worn. Naval officers enter and depart with orders which may send them to the Orkneys and the Grand Fleet, to the Mediterranean, to the Indian Ocean, or to the South Seas. Wherever the salt water is deep enough to float a keel, British ships of war are moving in obedience to the commands transmitted from these quiet and dingy rooms.

In one of them is the First Sea Lord, but the man who succeeded Jellicoe is not apt to be found seated at his desk unless there are papers to sign. He prefers to stand while he talks, or to move about the room when his mind is busy with its problems, pulling a silver cigarette case from his pocket, screwing a monocle into his eye or twirling it at the end of a cord. The American stage notwithstanding,

an Englishman can be manly, brave, and unaffected and yet wear a single eyeglass.

Admiral Sir Rosslyn Wemyss reminds one of Roosevelt in his intense, dynamic energy of manner and capacity for work. The war gave him his opportunity. He won it in the Mediterranean, during the Dardanelles campaign, where greater reputations were damaged beyond repair. In a record of events otherwise disastrous his achievements were conspicuously successful. Until he was rewarded with the command of the Mediterranean naval forces, he was almost unknown to the public.

Admiral Wemyss resembles Vice-Admiral Sims in the ability to inspire devoted service. Both are men of action with long and varied experience in ships at sea, and both can play the courtier and diplomat when occasion requires. When it comes to discussing naval matters the First Sea Lord speaks straight from the shoulder, with an abrupt and convincing sincerity.

"Tell them when you go home that your Navy is first-class," he said to me. "We like your people immensely. I hear it from our admirals and other officers. There is nothing to be gained by flattery or empty compliments. We are in it together to the finish. And our fleets must work in harmony after this beastly war is over, or God help the civilization we are fighting to save. To my mind we can't afford to misunderstand each other. All that rubbish should be swept aside."

"What of the chance of another great naval battle?" I asked. "The American ships hope to take a hand in it."

"They may have an opportunity," was the instant reply. "Naval conflicts are governed by the unexpected. They cannot be foreseen. It would be too bad, now, would n't it, if you went back to the States and missed something really big? It is fair to assume that the summer will not be wholly idle."

"For the Grand Fleet?"

"That depends upon the decision of the Germans. You hear a lot about their will to conquer, but not so much about their will to fight at sea. But I think I may go so far as to say that naval activity is likely to occur in the near future."

"By digging them out of their holes?"

"Ah, better ask your Admiral Sims what he thinks about that," smiled the First Sea Lord. "He is not rated as a man to hang back. I have a high opinion of his professional judgment. We have seldom disagreed."

CHAPTER XVIII

MERCHANT SHIPS AND NAVY GUNNERS

STRONGLY recalling the seafaring of long ago is the story of the American armed merchant ships which steered out from port in 1917 to convey precious cargoes to the nations that sorely needed them. They were armed, not as privateers, but solely to defend themselves against unlawful attack, precisely as had been those old Yankee merchant fleets of a vanished era. They went singly, without a naval escort, for the convoy system was not in operation until several months later, and when disaster came they faced it alone.

During the long wrangle in the Senate over the Armed Neutrality Bill the issue was befogged by "the little group of wilful men" whose motives were bitterly assailed. Whatever else inspired their conduct, they were at least both ignorant and stupid. The President asked nothing more than was justified by American history and precedent. Hundreds of vessels once sailed heavily armed out of Boston, Salem, and Portsmouth in times of nominal peace, nor did any foreign government consider it a hostile act.

They were honest trading ships in duty bound to protect themselves against lawless aggression, on seas which swarmed with pirates and buccaneers.

And it was these same armed merchantmen which were swiftly commissioned as privateers at the outbreak of the Revolution and which swooped to sea like hawks. They captured eight hundred British ships, audaciously hovering in the English Channel and the Irish Sea, and dealt the enemy's prestige a deadlier blow than did Washington's armies by land. It was in merchant ships, authorized as privateers, that Captain Jonathan Haraden, a figure to stand beside John Paul Jones, captured a thousand British cannon upon the high seas, and he took them all in the smoke and flame of gunpowder.

This stanch American doctrine was revived in the twentieth century because the Imperial German Government had given promises which were intended to be broken. The United States was reluctant to believe that the statesmanship and diplomacy of a great nation could be built wholly upon dishonor and brutality. The German proclamation that all merchant ships would be sunk without warning inside a barred zone was the conclusive proof that all international law was regarded as a scrap of paper. The President of the United States, exerting the power which he had the right to use without any special authority from Congress, notified all nations through the Department of State, on March 13, that: —

In view of the announcement of the Imperial German Government on January 31, 1917, that all ships,

those of neutrals included, met within certain zones of the high seas, would be sunk without any precaution taken for the safety of the persons on board, and without the exercise of visit and search, the Government of the United States has determined to place upon all American merchant vessels sailing through the barred areas an armed guard for the protection of the vessels and the lives of the persons on board.

Now, the distinction was very carefully made, that these were not armed ships, but merchant ships carrying armed guards. This was because the guns and gunners were to be furnished by the United States Navy. In order to retain their status as merchant ships, their skippers were to continue in command and the naval gun crews were to attend strictly to their own business of trying to sink as a pirate any submarine which should fail to observe the laws of boarding and searching for contraband. It was perfectly clear that arming a ship for defense was a right and not a belligerent act and that the presence of defensive gun crews did not make vessels either auxiliary cruisers or ships of war.

The old-fashioned mariner had no such technicalities as these to bother about. His own crew fought his ship as well as sailed her, and he could find plenty of men trained to the trade. In these degenerate days merchant sailors fight mostly among themselves, and the Navy is the one resource for arming ships. What seems like splitting hairs in the matter of the "armed guard" was therefore merely

a device to let the Navy do the work and yet avoid any confusion as to the character of the vessel. No matter how many guns she might mount, she was still a merchantman controlled by her captain, crew, and owners.

It was new business for the Navy to undertake and the demand came at short notice, in the midst of a rush of preparation for war. To key the fighting fleet to the highest possible notch of efficiency was the one thought in mind. Here was the armed guard, to be organized overnight as a separate department of the service, liners and cargo steamers tied up at the docks and clamoring for their guns and gun crews, the country very impatient and accusing the Government of somnolence.

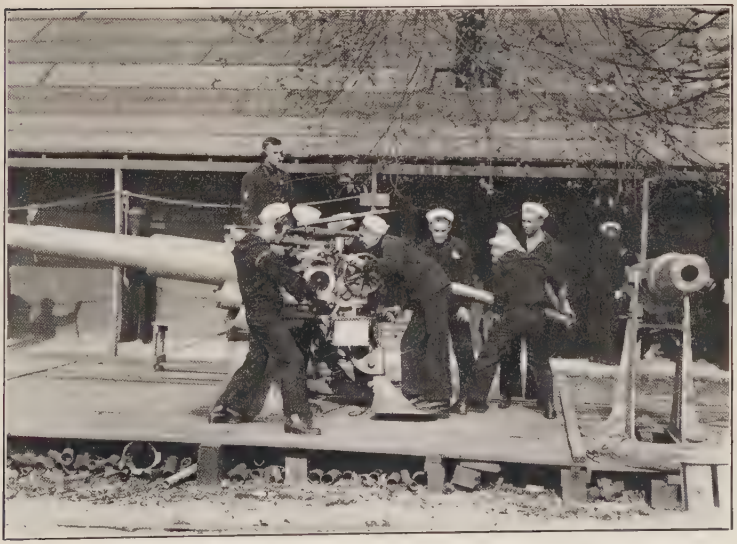
To lay hands on scores of guns of the smaller sizes required was one phase of the problem put up to the Navy. They were not piled up in storage like the old twelve-pounders in the East India warehouses of Salem a hundred years ago. War was impending, and it was known that a great number of these secondary battery pieces would be required to arm the transports and naval auxiliaries. Equipping merchantmen was an additional task and a very large one. The guns were found, however, and excellent guns they were, nor were the merchant ships kept waiting any longer than was necessary to build the platforms and mount the weapons in position.

When it came to finding gun crews there were

complications. The six men who put a four- or five-inch gun through its paces are trained to work together in highly perfected team-play. The word went to the Fleet that so many gun crews were to be drafted for the armed guard and detached at once. There were lamentations and protests in ward-room and on quarter-deck, unofficial, of course, and rumblings among the chief petty officers. A good sight-setter, pointer, or spotter was worth his weight in gold to any ship. The destroyers could not bear to lose any of theirs because they would be first into action when the war really broke. The rivalry among the great gray citadels of battleships was too keen to suffer being robbed of men who could put a hole through a target. It was a situation rather up to the private conscience of the commanding officer. If he had a Puritan ancestry he obeyed orders to the letter and sent a first-class lot of gunners. If he let his professional zeal stand in the way a bit, the draft he forwarded was — well, not quite so highly trained. Not such an easy matter to decide, when there are never enough crack gunners to go round!

However, there came to these first armed merchant vessels a wonderfully keen lot of young men, long enough in the service to know what was required of them, directly in charge of chief gunner's mates and chief boatswain's mates with three or four "hash-bars" on their sleeves. Their officers may have been reluctant to permit these drafts to

"BOOK DRILL"



THE ARMED GUARD AT GUN DRILL IN A NAVY YARD

leave the Fleet, but the spirit of the gunners was quite otherwise. Instead of drilling in harbor, they were to put to sea and get the chance of action. Shooting up submarines was the proper stuff! Some sport to that!

That ships were sinking every day with never an opportunity to fight back, crews blown up in their bunks or engine-rooms, failed to check the enthusiasm of these eager bluejackets. It was a sport about which they knew nothing whatever, nor could their officers teach them the lessons of experience. A target so small, elusive, and momentary as a submarine was beyond their conception. Some of them were natives of inland States who had been sent from the Great Lakes training school to the Fleet where they had their first glimpses of salt water. Crossing the ocean was a great adventure in itself. Defensive action against submarine attack required schooling of a special kind, but there was little time to organize preliminary instruction among the gun crews so hastily drafted and sent aboard merchant ships.

In the Fleet they had been units of a tremendous fighting force, living between decks with a thousand disciplined men. Now they were to work out their own salvation, perhaps no more than a dozen or so in a ship. From the Fleet most of them were sent to the navy yards of Atlantic ports where the barracks were already crowded with bluejackets and marines. There was no place in the organized

scheme of things for these rough-riders of the sea. They were berthed aboard interned German ships at the piers, shifting their bags from one to another, cheerful vagrants until quarters could be built for them.

Then the curtain of secrecy was dropped. The next news published was that an American passenger liner, with a battery manned by naval gun crews, had safely made the passage to England. It was an event of thrilling interest to the nation, memorable as an overt defiance of the German doctrines which made the freedom of the seas a ghastly farce. It was in keeping with the maritime traditions of the United States which had sent Preble and Decatur to destroy the nests of Algerine pirates who, with all the insolence of a Kaiser of to-day, had terrorized the merchant shipping of the world at the gateway of the Mediterranean. Clean-cut and decisive, it was the act which was shortly to bring about the declaration of a righteous war.

There was a certain dramatic fitness in the fact that one of these American liners should have been first to accept the German challenge. Two of them were built in an American yard, and for twenty years they had plied across the Western Ocean, leaving it for a time to serve as cruisers in the Spanish War. When launched, they embodied high hopes of a restoration of a merchant marine which should break the monopoly, English and German, of the ocean trade in American ports. Such hopes were

doomed to disappointment because this world war was needed to convince the people of the United States that ships are as vital to their welfare as factories, railroads, and mines. At enormous cost they are again learning to think in terms of the sea.

The first voyages of these armed liners were the spectacular incidents of the weeks before the war began, but no less important was the arming of the humble cargo boats. The liners had speed to protect them, their decks were specially built for mounting guns, living-quarters for the gun crews were readily available, and a body of highly intelligent and experienced merchant officers was prepared to coöperate with the fighting force.

It was more essential, in fact, to safeguard the freighters and oil tankers which wallowed deep-laden, at a much slower gait, to the ports of England, France, and Italy. They were crammed to the hatches with supplies, with food and fuel and steel, with the resources which Europe required to keep the Allied armies in the field and maintain her industries at home. Fabulous freight rates had recalled to service every vessel that could stay afloat and turn her engines over.

Some of them were small, with barely room enough for their own crews and no quarters whatever for a naval guard. Temporary deck-houses had to be constructed, decks cleared of their gear to make way for the guns, a hundred details arranged to insure the health, comfort, and efficiency of the gunners.

There was one nervous skipper who commanded an ancient tub which was held together only by her paint. To the chief boatswain's mate in charge of the bluejackets he came beseeching, as the steamer passed out to sea, that they do without target practice and shoot at no submarines unless they positively had to. His ship was very old, he explained, and she could never stand the shock of those guns. They would shake the rivets out of her at the first blast and she would just open up like a basket and head for Davy Jones.

Now, the Navy is a wonderfully adaptable organization, by no means so fettered with red tape and precedent as many land-lubbers suppose. The armed guard was rapidly evolving itself as a separate branch of the service. Ship-owners found that they had to deal with a number of youthful lieutenants and ensigns, very much on the job, who were ready to advise, inspect, and issue commands if need be. Standing behind them were officers of higher rank including naval constructors, who received their general instructions from Washington and saw that they were enforced.

Tact and diplomacy were prime requisites. The merchant skipper who had been an autocrat on his own bridge was apt to resent any interference with his authority. He suspected that these Navy gunners would interfere with him, and proposed to show them who was in command. There were owners who objected to the extra outlay of fitting out the

A NAVAL GUN CREW READY TO TAKE A CARGO SHIP TO SEA

ships and who flinched from the idea of feeding ten or a dozen husky Navy men and paying their wages besides, which was part of the bargain. Here and there was one who cared very little about carrying an armed guard so long as his ship and cargo were well insured. On the other hand, most owners and agents made the task easier by showing a spirit of cordial coöperation and an anxiety to take the best of care of the gunners.

In fairness to both sides, it may be interesting to quote from the records of the Departments two contrasting instances of how matters fared on shipboard. One chief petty officer wrote at the end of the voyage: —

' It is with great pleasure that I mention the captain and his officers as most courteous men who assisted and worked with me in every respect. I have the captain to thank for many kindnesses tendered the armed guard. As an example he allowed my men the privileges of the ship's slop-chest without cost. Each man was given boots, gloves, woolen underclothing and socks, also oilskins, as it was unexpectedly cold for the season of the year when we got into northern latitudes.

Now for the reverse picture, to indicate that this particular Navy job is not all beer and skittles. A chief master-at-arms commanded the armed guard across the Atlantic in a small tanker, and he reported as follows: —

An insufficient supply of provisions was carried which on the outward trip resulted in no fresh meat after the eighth day. While lying at a French port,

we had no breakfast or dinner. Coming home, the fresh provisions were gone after three days at sea, and we had to eat the emergency rations in the lifeboats. On the day we reached port there was nothing left in the ship except tea.

On both outward and return voyages, the lights from ports and doors were continually exposed while passing through the danger zone. I protested to the captain, but no steps were taken to stop it. While nearing the English coast the Morse lights and whistles were used, in spite of my protests, and the captain also refused to zigzag. I told him to follow his instructions, but he replied that the ship was slow and much time would be lost by zigzagging.

During an encounter with an enemy submarine either the captain or the first officer gave the signal to abandon ship about ten seconds after the enemy was sighted. The firemen came on deck, the engines were stopped, and there was a rush to the boats. The captain ordered the engineers below and requested that I send one of my men to see the order obeyed. A petty officer armed with a pistol saw the order obeyed.

The chief engineer was ordered by the captain to go below and get the ship under way. He did not obey this order, and I therefore covered him with my pistol and threatened to shoot him if he did not immediately get the ship under way. He obeyed my order. The conduct of the chief engineer was in disobedience of orders in the presence of the enemy and it was only after my threatening to kill him that he obeyed the captain.

As a sequel of the unhappy tale, there is on file a note sent ashore from an anchorage in an Atlantic harbor just after this steamer reached port: —

To the Commanding Officer, Navy Yard.

We regret to state that this ship is out of provisions and there was scarcely enough food for last night's supper. Up to the present we have had no breakfast or dinner. The time is now 12.20 noon.

(Signed) THE ARMED GUARD

This ship was owned by a wealthy corporation whose management was informed by the Navy Department, after investigation, that no more armed guards would be furnished unless the captain, the second and third officers, and the chief engineer were removed. This was done and the ship sailed again with a new crew and enough to eat. As for the sheer cowardice displayed in face of danger, the case was exceptional. The reports indicated that American merchant officers were acquitting themselves bravely, as might be expected, amid the gravest hazards imaginable.

The statement of this chief master-at-arms is extremely laconic. He has no gift of narrative, but he knew how to get results. The fire-room gang in a panic the instant the submarine was sighted, swarming on deck to tumble into the boats, the disgraceful rout led by the chief engineer, and two Navy men driving them below to their duty! "I threatened to shoot him. . . . He obeyed my order" is a compact summary of the business. The ship lumbered on again, the gunners at their stations and busily shooting at a submarine which presently forsook them to seek a victim less pugnacious.

I boarded this same steamer while she lay in port. A dirty little hooker! You could fancy her banged about by the winter gales, standing on her nose or almost rolling her funnel under, decks awash, and bitter weather for the bluejackets on lookout or standing watch at their guns. The same chief petty officer was going out in her, with his eager crew of youngsters who lived in the hope of potting a submarine. Bronzed and hearty with the Navy stamp upon him, this commander of the armed guard said, with a smile: —

"Sure, I'm going again. And five hundred men in our barracks would give a month's pay to swap places with me. Yes, I know they're warm and dry, and they get fed like fighting-cocks. But there's something doing with us crews that are ordered out. Get the difference? By good luck I have n't been blown up yet, but there's lads in the draft that have been torpedoed a couple of times. Do you see them hanging back? Not on your life! All that ails those guys is that they have to wait too long to get another ship."

How accurately the Germans were able to detect the approach of a steamer and at the same time remain invisible was a matter of guesswork, and the knowledge was gained by tragic experience.

To be sunk with never a chance to fight was a bitter dose. It happened often during those early months while the gunners were learning the tricks of the submarine and before the owners were aiding

them with smoke-boxes, camouflage paint, and anthracite coal in the war-zone. There was no loss of life on the Navy list until the freighter Aztec was torpedoed without warning. She was a slow ship, laden deep with merchandise. It was then that John I. Eopolucci, boatswain's mate, met his death by drowning while in the service of his country, a tried man with three enlistments. Unknown until then, he won remembrance because he was the first to go. His parents were Italian immigrants flung into the melting-pot and he was a true American. To his mother, who suffered her loss with Roman dignity and fortitude, the Secretary of the Navy wrote this personal letter: —

It is with the deepest regret that the Department must inform you of a report from France to the effect that all of the enlisted men of the Navy who formed the armed guard of the steamship Aztec of the Oriental Navigation Company, sunk by a German submarine on April 1st, are safe except John L. Eopolucci, boatswain's mate, first class, who is still missing. When last seen, he was in the second boat that left the ship. The Department does not give up hope that he may have been saved, but must frankly admit that the possibilities are remote.

The sympathy which I feel for you cannot lessen the sorrow which has come to you. You can only be consoled by the knowledge that your son bravely volunteered for this dangerous duty and was the first man to give up his life for his country in the present struggle.

Akin to this episode was the loss of the tanker Vacuum. The disaster was commonplace enough to the bestial annals of the German submarine campaign, — merely that scores of men were set adrift in open boats and many of them perished of cold and exhaustion.

The tanker was torpedoed in the morning, before the lookouts had a glimpse of a periscope. Two minutes after the explosion tore the steel hull apart, the stern of the ship settled under water, throwing the after gun crew overboard. These men were picked up by the captain's first boat. Somehow two other boats were dropped and pulled clear before the tanker dived to the bottom. In the afternoon one boat capsized twice in the heavy seas, losing four men who failed to hold on to the gunwales while the others were righting it. Eighteen men had been in the boat when it left the others. Besides the four drowned, eleven more died upon the thwarts or awash in the icy water that half-filled the boat. Among these were Lieutenant Thomas, commanding the armed guard of the United States Navy, the first officer to die in the war, and whose name should be coupled with that of Ensign Worth Bagley, who stood first in the honor roll of the Navy dead in the Spanish War.

Their fates were very different. Young Bagley went into Cardenas Bay in the destroyer Winslow against heavy odds and fought his guns until he died in his tracks. It was give and take, between

honorable foemen, and Bagley's finish was such as a brave sailor would choose for himself. The Spanish played the game like gentlemen, afield and afloat, and if you are fond of comparisons, set an Admiral Cervera beside an Admiral Von Tirpitz!

There was one young seaman of the armed guard of the Vacuum who lived long enough to be cast ashore on a lonely island of the Hebrides. There he died, but meanwhile his mother had written this letter to the Navy Department: —

Will you kindly let me know immediately if it is true that the steamer Vacuum was sunk on Saturday by a torpedo? If so, please tell me that my boy, my only son, is safe. He was a gunner on that ship. His name is Frank L——. Oh, for God's sake, tell me he is safely rescued and on his way home! You will greatly oblige, and relieve an almost distracted mother.

The boy was dead, but there was this consolation, that in his last hours he was cared for by a Scotch mother and daughter who dwelt at a lighthouse on a headland of the Hebrides. They were of the clan MacDonald, whose ruined strongholds on Mull and other islands near by recall the days of their savage forays against the MacLeans. To the mother of the seaman these good women wrote to tell of their sympathy and how they had tried to keep him alive. He wore a ring, they said, but the room was small and he tossed about on the bed, and it slipped from his finger and was lost out of the door or window, so they could not send it home to America.

After the seaman's mother had received the letter from the MacDonalds she poured out her heart to the Navy Department, "thanking each one and all from the depths of my heart and offering most sincerely my appreciation for their kindness to my dear boy, my only son, who was one of the first to give his life for our country, though the giving was a great loss and sorrow to me and his two sisters who are left. We mourn his loss deeply, but are sincerely thankful that he fell among kind hands and loving hearts, a lonely boy far from his own loving mother's care in the last hours of life. Let me thank you once again, and all who were interested in my boy's care."

The records of the armed guard are not all sadness and disaster. Far from it. Among the brighter episodes let us consider the case of the four-masted schooner Glynn. At the outset guns were placed aboard one or two of these Yankee sailing vessels, but were soon withdrawn. The big schooners were too helpless when in the war-zone, for one thing, and their owners were none too eager to pay the cost of protection. A certain fore-and-after was laid up in port for nearly a month, waiting for orders. Her captain and owners finally complained that there were as many gunners aboard as sailors in the ship's company, and their appetites were prodigious. They were eating up the profits of the voyage and the vessel was threatened with bankruptcy.

This other schooner, the Glynn, whose record is

more heroic, was working to the eastward under full sail, with a moderate breeze. She was traversing the danger-zone at the leisurely rate of four or five knots an hour, a towering mark for a submarine to discern, with her white topsails soaring a hundred feet above the deck. Twilight was near, in the second dog watch, and all hands were loafing on deck, the skipper a trifle nervous, the cook unperturbed as most sea-cooks are in time of stress. The crew of Navy gunners had their own lookout at the masthead. Their chief was an Irishman, Donnelly by name.

We sighted a submarine approaching at high speed [he reported]. At 6.55 P.M. the submarine opened fire at about 4500 yards, closing rapidly. She fired five shots before getting our range. The sixth shot exploded at about fifty feet off our starboard beam, fragments of the shell going through our foretopsail, foresail, and jib.

We then engaged, having held our fire until the enemy came to its closest range. She was then moving parallel to us. Our first shot ranged 3000 yards, falling short and to the right. I brought the range up to 3500 yards. The shots then fell close aboard the submarine which immediately dove. I believe that the last shot fired took effect, but the enemy was evading fire by diving rapidly. The action was over at 7.15.

The enemy failed to return to the surface, although we were in that vicinity until the following morning at 3.45 A.M. with the gun crews standing by the guns.

This was an engagement infrequent in present-day warfare, an armed merchant schooner under

full sail, not only beating off a submarine attack, but actually driving the infernal craft away. The chief gunner honestly believes he hit and disabled her and will swear to it on a stack of Bibles as high as the mainmast. The submarine's behavior certainly suggests that she was dazed and groggy after that last shot at thirty-five hundred yards.

To match this episode in Yankee seafaring, you must turn back to the chronicles of long ago, such as the letter written by Captain Richard Wheatland, of the ship Perseverance, in 1799, and dated from the Old Straits of Bahama: —

A schooner has been in chase of us since eight o'clock and has every appearance of being a privateer. . . . At three o'clock, finding ourselves fairly clear of Sugar Key and Key Laboas, we took in steering sails, wore ship, hauled up our courses, and prepared for action. The schooner immediately took in sail, and passed under our lee. We wore ship, she did the same, and we passed each other within half a musket. A fellow hailed us in broken English and ordered the boat hoisted out, and the captain to come on board with his papers, which he refused. He enforced his orders with a menace that in case of refusal he would sink us, using the vilest and most infamous language it is possible to conceive of.

He wore and came up on our starboard quarter, giving us a broadside as he passed our stern, but fired so wild that he did us very little injury, while our stern-chasers gave him a noble dose of round shot and lagrange. We hauled the ship to wind, and as he passed poured a whole broadside into him with great success.

His musket balls reached us in every direction, but his large shot either fell short or went considerably over us, while our guns loaded with round shot and square bars of iron were plied so briskly and directed with such good judgment that before he got out of range we had cut his mainsail and foretopsail all to rags and cleared his decks so effectively that when he bore away there were scarcely ten men to be seen. . . . The action, which lasted an hour and twenty minutes, ended well, for we feel confidence that we have rid the world of some infamous pests of society.

The chief gunner of this modern Yankee schooner which fought a submarine expresses a similar confidence concerning certain Teutonic pests of society. His argument has merit. Unless disabled, why did the U-boat so quickly abandon her prey? There was nothing in sight to frighten her off, barring the two guns on the schooner which might have been easily outranged. A big four-master, carrying two or three thousand tons of cargo, is worth sinking, even at the price of a torpedo.

In the naval gun crew was a smooth-cheeked youngster with one of those smiles that never come off. He would not dare to advance his theory in the presence of the two-fisted chief gunner, but here is how he explained it to me: —

"Maybe we hit the damn submarine and maybe we did n't. Anyhow, she beat it. She was surely afraid of us. You see, we let her come mighty close before we cut loose with our two guns. They were mounted behind the bulwarks which had hinged

doors or ports cut in. When we dropped these screens and let her have it, Fritz was puzzled a whole lot. He took us for a mystery ship and wondered what else we had up our sleeves. Do you get him piping us off from the conning-tower and rubbing the old bean while he tries to figure us out? These mystery ships were bad medicine. 'They have mussed up some fine, elegant U-boats that never came back,' says Fritzie to himself, 'and if I don't watch out, this big dub of a schooner is liable to take my number. She may have whole rows of big guns tucked behind those bulwarks.' With these few remarks, the web-footed Hun concludes to duck."

"Very plausible, my son," said I, "but how do you know you did n't hit him?"

The youth fired up at this and earnestly declared: "On the level, a pointer and a trainer that could n't land on that mark at three thousand yards ought to get ten years apiece in the Portsmouth navy brig. Leave it to the chief gunner. He may be right, at that."

CHAPTER XIX

FIGHTING AS LONG AS SHE FLOATS

THE loss of the tanker Campana and the capture of five American bluejackets by a submarine which carried them as prisoners to Germany was sensational. It was feared that the threat to treat these gun crews, not as enemies of war, but as pirates, might be executed, and the fate of Captain Fryatt was in every one's mind. The men were not murdered, however, a fact significant in the light of other incidents which seemed to indicate that the policy of the German Government instructed submarine commanders to treat American seamen less wickedly than the hated English. At any rate, there were no such tragedies among American merchant ships as that of the Belgian Prince or the many atrocities inflicted upon helpless, weaponless British sailors.

The Campana affair was an extraordinary sea duel, and it was none the less to the credit of the armed guard that they had to give up the ship because their ammunition was expended. David Porter in the Essex frigate surrendered to the Phœbe and the Cherub at Valparaiso, but he fought one of the most heroic actions in the War of 1812 and the Navy honors his memory as enrolled among its illustrious figures.

Chief Gunner Delaney, of the Campana, was made prisoner, and the official report was written by one of his men. It reads, in part: —

There was no sight of the submarine, and the first warning was three rapid shots from one point on the starboard quarter which missed. The submarine was then seen to be on the surface in the dazzling path of the rising sun and 8000 yards distant.

Our stern gun opened fire, and from then on, for four hours and ten minutes, shots were exchanged, the range varying but little. During the first hour the submarine's shells all fell about 200 yards over the ship. She then closed to about 7300 yards, and it was believed that at this time four of our shots hit, as she immediately dropped back to the former position. Only four hits in about 400 shots were made by the submarine.

The ship's crew passed ammunition and at no time was there any excitement or confusion. My crew was kept at the forward gun ready to go into action and keeping a sharp lookout for other enemies. After two hours the chief gunner's mate sent for my pointers to relieve the men at the after gun whose eyes were badly swollen and whose ears were running blood. The rest of the after gun crew did not wish to be relieved. After these pointers had fired for about one hour their eyes also became swollen.

It was two hours before the submarine got the range and her shots fell close to our stern. Four hits were made, one in No. 1 hold, one in No. 4 hold, one amidships on the starboard side, and one through the engineer's store-room which caught fire. The blaze was extinguished by the ship's crew. After three hours of action the captain of the ship wished to quit and

abandon her, as we were liable at any moment to suffer casualties. His officers protested against surrendering as long as any ammunition was left.

After another hour and ten minutes of firing, the submarine's shots were falling close to the after gun. Inasmuch as only ten rounds of shell were left on board it was decided by the captain to abandon the ship in order to avoid useless loss of life.

The armed guard was the last to leave. The four boats pulled about a mile away and lay to. The submarine ran up to them at full speed and nearly rammed the boats, but stopped and beckoned them alongside. A five-inch gun forward was trained on the boat containing the armed guard, and eight of the submarine crew armed with revolvers covered the other boats. The submarine commander stood on the conning-tower and a lieutenant on deck.

The commander then called out, —

"Captain of the ship, come alongside and come aboard."

The captain obeyed.

The commander then called, —

"Lieutenant of the gunners."

No one replied, Captain Oliver, of the Campana, telling him there was none in charge.

The commander then said, "All the gunners, hands up," which we obeyed as the men with revolvers covered us. He then turned to the other three boats and asked if there were any Englishmen there. He was told that there were none, and he then ordered the boats to pull for the land. After this he counted the men in the armed guard's boat and said for all to come aboard the submarine except four.

Nine of the guard and the third officer of the ship went on board, leaving four of the guard and the sec-

ond officer in the boat. The commander then questioned us as follows, while we stood on the deck of the submarine: —

"Who fires the gun?"

"Who points the gun?"

"Who finds the range?"

"Who gives the order to fire?"

To each question we answered, —

"Oh, anybody. We just load and shoot any old way."

After talking in German with his lieutenant, the commander ordered his seamen into our boat and were towed toward the ship, leaving us aboard the submarine. They were rowed alongside by the four gunners that had stayed in the boat and climbed aboard the steamer. They remained there for half an hour, searching for documents and instruments. They filled the boat with copper and brass fittings and provisions, mostly canned goods, and with bedding. They were anxious to take our after gun and rigged a boom and tackle to unship it, but were unable to do so. We had removed the breech plugs and sights from both guns. Bombs or mines were then placed in the forward hold of the ship and exploded at noon, five minutes after the boat pulled away.

The submarine commander told us that he had orders to keep the captain of the ship and all the American gunners as prisoners, but as he had insufficient room and supplies he would take only the captain and five gunners. He called for volunteers, C. L. Kline, gunner's mate, third class, and R. Roop, boatswain's mate, second class, answering. He then picked out Chief Gunner Delaney, and Jacobs and Miller, seamen, and sent them all down the forward hatch.

The commander praised us for our good gunnery and

for fighting against such odds, also complimenting the gunners on their personal appearance. He said he had been hit four times, but would allow no one to go abaft the conning-tower where the shots had struck. We were then told that a message had been picked up from another merchant ship which was coming to our assistance, but we were advised not to go near her as the submarine intended to sink her. He ordered us into our boat and after rowing for an hour we joined the three other boats and made sail for land, being sighted and picked up by a friendly gunboat.

So much for the bare narrative of the Campana. In conversation the gunners who returned to their own country were able to add many details more informal. They could see no reason for fighting four hours without breakfast, it seems, so they took turns at the coffee and bacon and eggs and kept the after gun going. In this Dewey had set them an excellent example in Manila Bay.

The submarine dared range no nearer than four miles because of the accurate fire from the steamer. In a word, the Germans were outfought and might have been compelled to quit the engagement if it could have lasted a little longer.

The conduct of this submarine commander was that of a blue-water sailor whose manly instincts had not been blotted out by the despicable business in which he was employed. The American gunners shrewdly concluded that he had been an officer of a Hamburg-American or North-German Lloyd steamer before the war. He was particularly anxious

to know what had been done with the interned liners Vaterland and Kaiser Wilhelm II, and he spoke what one of the Navy lads called "New York English." When the boat was finally shoved away from the submarine, the German sailors on deck stood at attention and punctiliously saluted the castaway gunners.

One of these bluejackets who escaped capture was a boy of seventeen, an age when most mothers' sons are still in high school and must be told to wear their rubbers on rainy days and otherwise fussed over, — entirely too young to be trusted with a latch-key. He reminded one of those bantam midshipmen of the era of the Constitution frigate who led boarding parties and pranced into the thick of it with cutlass and dirk. A pleasant-mannered, blue-eyed boy, he had crowded an astonishing amount of experience into a few months, from a naval training-school to the Fleet and then as the climax to the deck of a German submarine.

"It was interesting, and some of it was funny," said he. We were loafing in the yard of the armed guard barracks during one of his brief respites from drills and schooling. He was waiting for the summons to sail with another gun crew. "The Germans must have been mighty short of grub, for they surely cleaned the canned stuff out of our ship before they sunk her. One of them was standing at the rail with a case of condensed milk in his arms to lower into the boat. The poor boob dropped it and it

caught another Heinie right in the back of the neck. His nose was driven against the gunwale and smashed flat. Solid ivory above the ears, he was, or it would have killed him. That case of milk hit him, blim! just like a pile-driver.

"Soap? You say the report mentions their wanting soap? They were crazy for it. I thought they were going to eat it. They picked up all the little pieces in the rooms. There must be something in this story that they're shy of fats at home.

"What about parting with the five gunners that they carried off to Germany to put in the pen? Well, there was nothing very funny about that. Of course we did n't know which of us were to be elected and it sort of got your goat to think of being slammed under hatches in that blamed submarine. You could n't help thinking of what had happened to some of the Britishers that got caught this way. It was a new game for us Americans. Nobody really hung back when the commander asked for five volunteers, but we were a little slow in making up our minds to go to it. We did n't all pipe up at once, I mean.

"The commander was in a hurry, so he aims a finger at the petty officers and then beckons the huskiest pair of seamen and says, 'You go,' and, 'I take you.' The rest of us shook hands with them, but there was none of the good-bye and God bless you stuff.

"I have n't been long in the service, but I'm wise

to the fact that there's no time for heroes in the Navy. You do your duty and take it as it comes. Sure, a couple of the fellows had tears in their eyes, but they kept a stiff upper lip all the same. This lad Kline that was one of the prisoners had grinned all through the scrap, and the grin was still on his Irish map when he left us, the last man to climb down inside the submarine and begin a free ride to Germany."

"And what do your own fond parents think of your career?" I asked this precocious bluejacket. "You had to have their permission to join."

"Well, when I was sent to the Fleet they felt sort of easy about me. Dad figured that the battleships would be kept on this side of the ocean and I was a pretty safe bet. This armed guard detail upset 'em, 'specially mother, and they went up in the air when they heard my ship was sunk. But dad feels different now. He's got into the spirit of it, all right, and he won't be happy until I help blow the daylights out of a submarine."

Have American armed merchant ships actually sunk German submarines? If you care to believe the water-side rumors and fo'castle yarns, one of these devilish marauders is rammed or blown up on every voyage across the Atlantic. In grog-shops where merchant seamen seek haven and pound the bar with hairy fists, strong liquors magnify the tales, and the listener concludes that the Kaiser's undersea fleet must have been wiped out by now.

FIGHTING AS LONG AS SHE FLOATS

In the case of a certain cargo steamer there was no room for doubt that she removed an industrious submarine from the active list. The chief boatswain's mate of the armed guard was promoted to warrant rank as a reward for the feat.

"The engagement lasted thirty-five minutes, during which time the submarine fired about forty shots," said he, "scoring one hit under our port counter a foot from the water and causing a leak. Our twenty-sixth shot was seen to hit her just forward of the forward gun and a cloud of flame and dark gray smoke burst from the hatches. The crew of the submarine left the gun and ran aft. Almost instantly the submarine sank bow first, the stern lifting high out of the water so that the propellers could be seen revolving."

When the ship reached a French port of destination, and reported her victory, an official inquiry was ordered by the French Government. A naval lieutenant conducted it with great care and confirmed the verdict of the American gunners. The steamer fought with the American flag flying, he stated in his written opinion, firing twenty-seven shots in half an hour. The distance increased about a hundred metres for each shot. The twenty-sixth shot exploded, producing a thick black smoke which was visible to all on shipboard. Such an explosion must have been produced in the submarine itself. In summing up the evidence, he said: —

"The result of the inquiry is that the fight has

been very well conducted and that the men have shown a very fine spirit, doing honor to the American Navy. The conclusion may be drawn that the submarine was hit and probably sunk."

An American liner, formerly a favorite ship among Atlantic pilgrims, was carrying cargoes to the Allies. A blanket of fog covered the sea in the early morning. It lifted a trifle and a very much surprised submarine popped up dead ahead of the lunging prow. He let fly a torpedo in a wild flurry, at such an angle that it glanced along the steamer's side, without exploding. A moment later the submarine itself went bumping and scraping along the other side of the vessel, whose officers, sailors, and gunners stared straight down at it and uttered the deep and hearty curses of the sea. They would have swapped their souls for a few bombs to drop in remembrance. Grimy stokers poked their heads through the open ports and spat at the conning-tower, or passionately scrambled for lumps of coal and slice-bars to heave at the blankety blank thing. Then the fog swallowed it up and the incident was closed.

Brief items like these served to emphasize, like tragic etchings, the sinister chronicle of German piracy: —

In the morning picked up S.O.S. calls from four ships that had been torpedoed within two to three hundred miles from our position.

Passed a corpse with a life-preserver on.

FIGHTING AS LONG AS SHE FLOATS

Received several S.O.S. calls. All hands slept near guns.

It is not an uncommon thing to pass four or five ships during a voyage which are either being chased or have been torpedoed by submarines. The men fear being shelled in the open boats more than the torpedoes.

Three ships were seen on the beach where they had been driven by gunfire from submarines. A transport of a foreign power, loaded with troops, was torpedoed just ahead of us. Two ships were sunk astern of us.

For hard fighting and the dogged courage that we rightly ascribe to the men of the American Navy, the story of the Moreni and Chief Petty Officer Copassaki, commanding the armed guard, is one of those which shines undimmed in defeat. German sailors cheered him and his men from the deck of a submarine when he finished with his ship on fire and a cargo of gasoline about to blow him to kingdom come. He was made a warrant officer for devotion to duty and determination to fight as long as she floated.

After half an hour's fight, we were hit in the gasoline tank aft and a fire started [said he]. It was reported to me that the ammunition aft was running low. I lined up the forward gun's crew with the merchant crew to pass ammunition from forward to aft.

After fighting an hour longer, fire broke out all over the ship. It became impossible for the men to pass any more ammunition aft. When I saw that such was the case, I happened to be abaft the mainmast and called

for one of the gun's crew to go forward with me. I reached the bridge, being burned on the way, but the man was unable to follow me.

About this time the steering-gear was shot away and the ship steamed in circles. Coming down off the bridge, I saw the captain and boatswain who were holding the falls ready to lower the lifeboats. The captain asked me to come and get in his boat, as it was already on fire and it would be too late if we waited. I told him to wait, and he replied that he would hold the boat for me as long as possible.

We went forward and manned the gun with which we fired four more shots before it was put out of commission. When the submarine saw that our shells were dropping closer, she went full speed astern so that we could not see her. Then, as we could fire no more and as the captain called that the lifeboat was burning, we got into it. The boat upset when it hit the water and two of the merchant seamen were lost. We swam around until we could get to the capsized boat and turn it over.

The submarine called the boats alongside and the commander congratulated us, shaking hands with the captain and telling us that it was the best fight they had ever seen put up by a merchant vessel.

The Germans bandaged two of our men who had been wounded and returned to the other boats. Two hours after the submarine left us, we were picked up by a Spanish steamer. After we were aboard, a German submarine came up near by. An officer of the steamer went over to him in a small boat and appeared to receive some papers, after which he returned to the ship. The crew of the submarine cheered and the Spanish sailors cheered back, and we then steamed away.

CHIEF PETTY OFFICERS HORACE L. HAM AND ANDREW COPASSAKI

Armed guard commanders who were promoted to warrant rank for gallant actions against submarines

K. M. SMITH, SURVIVOR OF THE CAMPANA, WHO WAS TAKEN ABOARD A U-BOAT

This volcano of a tanker was no comfortable place, with the flames racing fore and aft. The chief gunner made a passage through it, "being burned on the way," and his men followed him into action for a final go at the Hun. It was another fight at very long range, conducted with extreme caution by the submarine.

Copassaki was looking after the new drafts as they came to the armed guard from the Fleet when I found him ashore. A dark, handsome man, showing a strain of foreign blood, he wasted no words, and insisted that "it was all in his report." From his matter-of-fact point of view there was nothing more to add. They had fought the ship until she was ready to blow up, and if the lifeboats had not caught fire he might have stayed a little longer. What seemed to distress him was the crazy course of the ship after her rudder was smashed. It spoiled the work of his gunners. Otherwise they might have found the target.

His mention of the amiable relations displayed between the Spanish steamer and the passing submarine suggests another story. A chief gunner, ashore at Gibraltar, met the master of a torpedoed American schooner who was trying to get passage home to the United States. This unlucky mariner narrated that his vessel had been lying in the port of Alicante, Spain. While in the town he made the acquaintance of a courteous man who asked if he were the captain of the American schooner then

in harbor. The stranger then went on to say that he was the commander of a German submarine which had run in for supplies. Taking a fancy to the Yankee skipper, possibly over a bottle of wine, he warned him not to go to sea because he would most certainly be sunk. Incidentally he remarked that the German Government had given orders to shoot all captured gun crews and wireless operators.

There was nothing extraordinary in running afoul of a German submarine in a Spanish port, the skipper explained in the course of his yarn. The U-boats were often seen at Alicante and Barcelona where they exchanged crews and the officers and men frequented the theatres and cafés. Deciding to disregard the warning, the captain cleared his schooner and engaged a tug. Just before sailing, he discovered a note on the cabin table, unsigned, and again advising him to remain in port. He went to sea that same day and when thirty miles off Cape Spartel, a submarine attacked the schooner with gun-fire, hit her four times, then shot at the crew after they were in their boat, and peppered away at a patrol which rushed to the rescue. The submarine was driven off, but the shipmaster was unable to identify the commander as his kindly friend of Alicante.

The war-zone would seem to swarm with submarines, after hearing the reports from many ships, and yet the luck of the Navy intervenes now and then. One chief gunner plaintively recorded: "The

ship was built in 1875 and with the only engines she ever had in her she did well to get by. We were a long time in dangerous zones, as our speed was between five and six knots an hour."

This ancient, rusty tramp creeping on her course no faster than a schooner, logging perhaps a hundred and twenty-five miles in a day, had never a glimpse of a submarine. There was another instance which a bluejacket with a sense of humor described after coming ashore.

"It was comical. The old bucket's engines laid down every fifteen minutes or so. This was while we were in dangerous waters, mind you, and right on edge for periscopes, five-inch shells, and torpedoes. The wireless man was catching messages from other ships that had got theirs, and we were just patching up and breaking down again and floating around like a weary old derelict.

"You won't believe it, but we were at this silly performance for a whole week before we went clear of the red line on the chart that marks the active area of Mr. Willie Hohenzollern's submarines. Nervous? What was the use? Some of the men got impatient and one or two were sure they could glim a periscope every time they looked over the side, but there was plenty of grub and a sociable crowd."

CHAPTER XX

"HURRAH, WE'RE OUTWARD-BOUND!"

WITHIN a year the armed guard force numbered many thousand men. It swiftly expanded as a naval department important and distinct. New merchant fleets were building, in the most tremendous increase of tonnage ever known, and they were to carry guns and crews to fight them. Quietly the Navy constructed barracks and organized training schools for this special service. The tutors were chief petty officers who had crossed the Atlantic and fought submarines. Stern experience had taught them its invaluable lessons. The game was no longer untried and novel.

In the school grounds were mounted types of the guns to be used in action. The men had been drilled in the Fleet, but there was more gunnery to learn. This was a different business from firing at a canvas target. Hunting the submarine is snap-shooting, incredibly difficult. Incessant practice is required to master the art of training and sighting a four- or five-inch rifle in a few seconds. There must be automatic coördination, from the spotter on the bridge with the telephone strapped to his head to the trainer, sight-setter, pointer, plugman, and shell-handlers who have no time for nerves or hesitation.

More than this, the trade demands eyesight

A DRAFT FROM THE FLEET ARRIVES FOR ARMED GUARD TRAINING

THE "SPOTTING BOARD" IN THE ARMED GUARD SCHOOL

drilled to detect a periscope or conning-tower, a sureness of vision which may, in an instant, decide the issue of life and death. Here the "spotting-board" comes into play, a device so entertaining that the pupils flock around it out of school hours. It is a long table upon which the ranges are marked by lines running both ways, at intervals representing a hundred yards. At one end is a square of tin, set on edge, with a narrow slit cut in it, and a shutter which can be dropped across it.

Upon the board is a tiny model of a submarine as seen when awash, its size scaled to fit this miniature bit of ocean. A little dab of cotton glued to a wooden base is called "the splash," and looks very much like the foam kicked up when a shell strikes the water. The Navy youth who is learning to "spot" takes his stand at the end of the board and looks through the slit in the square of tin. A comrade lifts the shutter and lets it drop, merely a glimpse of the surface and the dot of a submarine. The pupil estimates the distance and the deflection right or left, and calls out the shot.

Another member of the class places the "splash" where the lad at the shutter indicates, in his guess at the range. It may fall five hundred yards short or go over the submarine. At the next glimpse the "gunner" tries to correct his error, and again the "splash" is set to show how near he comes to the mark. If he has a quick eye and good judgment, he will land the "splash" within striking distance

of the submarine after four or five of these trial shots. This is an adaptation of the spotting-board game as used on the ships of the Navy, and it is particularly valuable for training the guards of the merchant vessels. Rather dismayed at first to find how very small a submarine appears when five thousand yards away, — like shooting at the head of a pin, — they soon catch the spirit of the job they are being fitted for and are eager to work everlastingly at it.

They will not all be "spotters" (the men who telephone the ranges to the gun crews), but their vision will be surer for this schooling, and, besides, it is wise to train them so that they can exchange stations in a crisis of an engagement. It is only by sheer luck that so few gunners at sea have been killed and wounded by shell-fire. When a man drops, his mates will be ready to fill his place and keep the gun in action. And so at the drill in the yard they shift from one position to another to be prepared for casualties. Such things are seldom discussed, but so long as the American Navy floats there will live in its compelling traditions the words of the dying Lawrence on the deck of the Chesapeake, "Don't give up the ship!"

There are classes in signalling, semaphore, and dotter, and at night with the "blinker" that sets the electric lamps to winking and flashing the letters of the Morse code. Lookout duty requires special instruction. Nothing is more important for defence

against the submarine. One petty officer, by way of impressing his audience, sternly quotes this awful example, possibly true and perhaps not: —

"One ship was lost because a lookout rolled a cigarette. Don't forget it."

For this purpose the "dummy compass" is employed, a card upon which the circle of the horizon is marked off in sectors like the pieces of a pie. It is vital that when a lookout sights a submarine he should be able to sing out the position, so many points off the bow or abaft the beam, in order that the gunners may instantly operate the training-gear and waste no precious seconds of time before the spotter begins sending his ranges. And the crew of the gun must learn to know precisely where to look when the man in the crow's-nest yells, "Periscope two points off the starboard bow!" This they practise in the yard until letter perfect, until every sector of the horizon has its definite meaning and location.

There is boat drill, more exacting than in the Fleet. The armed guard service has learned that to lower away, quickly and without bungling, to avoid capsizing in a heavy seaway, to fend off from a sinking ship whose propellers still thrash, is a race between life and death. It is part of their trade. Merchant crews are apt to be undisciplined as the records show, and when panic sweeps the ship their officers cannot hold them.

American lads no longer enter the forecastle to

work their way into the cabin as did their briny forefathers. Merchant seamen in steam are a mixture of alien races and often the dregs thereof. Owners cannot pick and choose. It is a question of finding any sailors at all. This is one reason why boat drill is on the bluejackets' programme. In many instances their coolness and dexterity have saved the ships' crews as well as their own lives.

By no means the least important part of this special course of training is the personal contact with the petty officers and seamen who have done their bit behind the guns and are waiting for another crack at a submarine. It is no theory with them. They know. Absorbed, respectful, the new recruits from the Fleet listen to their stories of sea fights and foreign ports. They gather in groups when the day's work is done, in barracks, and the drum and bugle no longer echo through the yard. The talk may run something like this:—

"When you're ashore on the other side you hear stuff that never gets into the newspapers. The Belgian Prince is n't the only case of its kind. Our lifeboats picked up the second engineer of a British steamer that had been sunk a few miles ahead of us. The submarine had taken off the officers, stood them on deck, closed the hatches, and then submerged after running five miles. The only survivor was this second engineer who could swim like a duck."

"I believe you! Did you know the Germans were

pulling this same stunt on their own sailors? What do I mean? Two of them were washed ashore last time I was in England. They were still alive, and explained that their commander had put them on deck as lookouts and then sealed his hatches while he was running awash in waters where the destroyers were after him. When he had to submerge in a hurry, these poor ginks just naturally floated off. That was what they were there for."

"Like chaining 'em to the machine guns on the Western front," observed a chief boatswain's mate, accepting the story as fact, for he had seen a thing or two himself. "Drowning is soon over. What about the boat from an American schooner we picked up last voyage? There was a sight to give you bad dreams. Fourteen days adrift, they were, and twelve days of it with nothing to eat but their boots. There had been eight men to start with. Four were alive when we found the boat — the captain, mate, and two seamen. Yes, they were some skinny and hungry-looking. Tough roosters, though. They could n't wiggle a fin, of course, but they chirked up a lot before we reached port."

There was a reflective pause and then another of the group went on to say: —

"There was one submarine outfit that got theirs, and I hope to God they were the same bunch that set those men adrift from the schooner. It came to me straight. An English ship was torpedoed and then shelled. She had something up her sleeve,

understand? When the submarine came alongside to finish the job, the commander stood outside the conning-tower and bawled out his orders to the boats to get clear in a hurry. The skipper of the steamer pulls an automatic and downs this Hun who falls with his body half in and half out of the open hatch of his submarine.

"A bunch of gunners that had let themselves get overlooked when the steamer's crew was scrambling out of the steamer ducked from under cover and cut loose. This dead submarine commander was jamming the hatch, do you see? One sailor was trying to pull him out and another was yanking him by the legs to haul him below. The U-boat could n't submerge with a hatch open, and the delay gave the gunners a chance to hustle another crew of Fritzies into hell, which they handsomely did."

. . . . . .

Sailing day comes and a deep-laden cargo steamer is about to dare the Western Ocean passage where hundreds of fine ships rest in the ooze of the bottom with shattered sides and shell-rent upper works. Brave men are these merchant officers, serving their country well and taking these vessels out with a nobler incentive than mere monthly wages. Trim, earnest, splendidly youthful, the members of the armed guard stand in line on deck and salute the lieutenant who has come on

board for a farewell inspection. They may have learned by heart a few lines of the instructions which their chief gunner has read and passed on to them, such as: —

"Never forget that good men with poor ships are better than poor men with good ships. Do not forget that wherever you go the Department and the country expect that your conduct will bring credit to the Navy and the United States."

There is no ceremony, none of the thrilling and elaborate routine with which the Fleet weighs anchor. The skipper tells the mate to heave short. The steam capstan clanks as the cable comes home. The screw churns a foamy wake, and slowly, solemnly, another gray hull slips seaward to run the gauntlet of the abominable piracy of Imperial Germany.

THE END

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